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An Unwritten Chapter in the History of Education

An Unwritten Chapter

in the

History of Education

Being

The History of the Society for the Education of the Poor of Ireland, generally known as the Kildare Place Society

1811–1831

By

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TO

MY STUDENTS

PAST AND PRESENT

WHOSE LOVE OF THEIR COLLEGE AND

DEVOTION TO THEIR WORK HAVE

MADE LIFE AT KILDARE PLACE

A CONSTANT JOY

111372

PREFACE.

THE discovery of the documents of the Society for the Education of the Poor of Ireland[1] suggested to me the duty of telling the story of their work. It soon became manifest that the records dealt with a movement which, though at first sight of a local nature, had nevertheless exercised a marked influence upon primary education generally. Hence the title of this book.

Closely interwoven as the doings of the Society were with the history, and the controversies of the time, it seemed necessary to present them in their historical setting. I have tried to do this in a way fair to those who opposed, as well as to those who supported what was done. Apart from the religious and political questions involved, the educational results which the Society achieved are such as to form a legitimate source of pride to Irishmen. I trust no failure of mine to tell the tale impartially will interfere with the just appreciation of labours,

[1] See Introduction, p. xxi.

in which the most prominent element was a sincere desire to benefit Ireland.

It is both a duty and a pleasure to give expression to the gratitude I feel to many friends whose assistance has been valuable.

Dr. Isabella Mulvany and my colleague, Mr. John Cooke, have discharged with generous kindness the task of reading the proofs. The sections which review the needlework, and the chapter which deals with the Publications of the Society, have had the advantage of the help of Miss Lloyd-Evans and the Rev. Dr. Tristram respectively. My thanks are due to Mr. T. W. Lyster and his courteous staff for the way in which they have placed at my disposal the resources of the National Library; also to the Editor of the *Journal of Education* for permission to include the chapter on Inspection and Inspectors, which originally appeared in the *Journal*.

KILDARE PLACE,
September, 1904.

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INTRODUCTION.

When the Archbishop of Canterbury (Dr. Benson) visited Ireland in 1896, his host, Lord Plunket, then Archbishop of Dublin, spoke to him of the educational work done at Kildare Place throughout the century, and especially of the lasting foundation which had been laid by the Kildare Place Society between 1811 and 1831. Upon the Archbishop's saying that he had never heard of the Kildare Place Society, he was told that not only did it represent the earliest attempt of the English Government to educate the poor, but that it had exercised marked influence upon the educational organisations of the time, and in particular had received the thanks of the National Society for its help and counsel. A few days after this conversation, Dr. Benson came to Kildare Place and inspected for himself some of the evidence upon which the statement rested, with the result that he fully recognised the truth of what had been said, and expressed wonder at the little which was known in general about so venerable a Society.

From a variety of causes the work done at Kildare Place has sunk into an oblivion which is not deserved. It is not likely that hitherto any English writers, however well informed, could have supplied details as to the first Parliamentary grants for elementary education; it would not occur to them that such particulars must be looked for in connexion with Ireland. It is quite certain that no one from the other side of the Channel could have given any account whatever of the Kildare Place Society as a pioneer in education work.

Nor is the knowledge of the subject which obtains in Ireland of a kind which is adapted to making good these deficiencies. The existence of the Kildare Place Society, its connexion with education, and its enjoyment of Government grants, are facts generally known, but accurate information extends no further. On the contrary, the tendency has been to leave on one side what the Society did for education, and to represent it as a party organisation, which employed its Government grants for the purpose of making proselytes of the Roman Catholics.

The Record of the O'Connell Centenary, for instance, gives the following summary of its aims and methods: 'Not a few Catholics and liberal Protestants, O'Connell, the late Duke of Leinster, and Lord Cloncurry, deluded by the speciousness of the professions of fair play made by the Society, and feeling keenly the dearth of popular instruction for,

and the poverty of, Catholics, subscribed to the funds and became members of the Board, while nearly all the Catholic bishops permitted the clergy to accept aid from the Society and place their schools under its inspection. The proselytising basis and the anti-Catholic bigotry of the administration of the system soon, however, convinced the Catholics that they trusted but to be betrayed.'[1]

Some examination of the circumstances which made such statements possible will be necessary presently. But the more grateful duty of recalling a series of forgotten facts, which are likely to be acceptable to all Irishmen, may first be discharged. It is not known that the Kildare Place Society stimulated the foundation of schools in every part of Ireland by supplying the necessary plans and contributing liberally towards the expenses of building and equipment. It is not known that they were publishers on a large scale, bringing out, on their own initiative, all the necessary school-books, and editing a cheap and convenient library, which was highly valued, not alone in Ireland, but throughout England and Scotland, and elsewhere. It is not known that they originated and conducted with signal success a large and most efficient training school for teachers. It is not known that they organised and carried out a careful system of inspection, which kept them accurately informed as to the

[1] *O'Connell Centenary Record*, p. 270.

work done in some fifteen hundred schools. It is not known that, as the result of their labours, the schools of Ireland attained to an excellence which caused them to be held up for admiration and imitation by the most competent observers of the time.

That facts so important in the general history of education should have escaped the notice of English writers is perhaps not remarkable; but that Irishmen should have forgotten or lost sight of so honourable a chapter in their history is not so easily understood. As will appear more fully hereafter, the explanation is to be found in the political circumstances of the time. The Society itself belonged to no party, and recognised no distinctions of creed. But its support was mainly identified with an administration which had offered long and determined opposition to the demand for Catholic Emancipation. This in itself was sufficient to engender suspicion. The charge of proselytism which consequently arose partook more of the nature of a cry than of a serious accusation. But there were other features in the situation which gave more real ground for dissatisfaction. The Roman Catholics disliked the colourless undenominationalism which the Society enforced; and they demanded, as their right, a completeness of educational control to which the principles of Kildare Place were resolutely opposed. It was upon these issues that the conflict was joined. As

year by year the power of the priests and of the people grew greater, with the help of O'Connell's leadership, and the force of the agitation which he inspired, the resistance and hostility to the Kildare Place schools became more and more determined. When at last Peel and Wellington found it impossible to withstand further the mighty movement which was carrying all before it, and when Emancipation was won, it was inevitable that all institutions which the popular voice connected with the opposition to their demands should go down in the general destruction. The Kildare Place Society perished, notwithstanding its educational efficiency, partly because of its undenominationalism, but much more because of the political ferment of the time. It perished, and so far as the majority of Irishmen were concerned, was either wholly forgotten or, if remembered at all, was thought of solely as a vanquished political foe.

Nor was the memory of the Society more intelligently cherished in the circles which might naturally have looked back with satisfaction upon its history. Here, too, the force of circumstances tended to divert attention from the educational achievements of the past. With the loss of the Government grants, life may be said to have departed from the Kildare Place Society. Efforts were indeed made to continue operations on a reduced scale, by means of private support. The

attempt, however, did not last long; the premises soon passed into other hands; and the Kildare Place Society, as an active educational body, ceased to exist.[1]

The predominating feature, so far as education was concerned, of the period which succeeded, was the prolonged struggle with reference to the rights and the methods of giving Religious Instruction. In this connexion, the undenominationalism of the old Society was as little acceptable to those who now controlled Kildare Place, as it had been to the Roman Catholics. So it came to pass that the disused branches of the old Society's activity were forgotten; and even the fragments that remained, in the Model School, and the training of Teachers, were looked on, not so much as the creations of the past, as the necessities of the present. Gradually everything that bore testimony to the former times disappeared. Such books and papers as escaped destruction either found their way into inaccessible cupboards, or descended into the great cellars with which the ground was honeycombed. The Kildare Place of 1811-1831, became to all intents and purposes as completely buried as any Roman City before the spade of the explorer restored it to light.

[1] In name the Society lingered till 1886, when it was merged in the Church of Ireland Training College, by the action of the Educational Endowments Commission.

Matters were in this condition, so far as knowledge of the educational work of the Kildare Place Society was concerned, when in 1884, for the third time, the premises changed hands, and the present Church of Ireland Training College began. Fresh in the memory of the writer is the feeling of interested surprise which was caused by his new environment. Fully aware that a history of importance attached to the buildings, but knowing nothing of its details, he expected that the gaps in his information would be readily supplied. It turned out that no one had anything to tell. Large buildings remained, built to a plan whose explanation would have to be sought in the requirements of other times. Some few pieces of handsome and massive furniture told a tale of former prosperity. Here and there it was possible to detect allusions to a condition of business and bustle which seemed to have been all pervading. But the key which might have unlocked the past was lost. That there had been a past of importance, everyone was aware; no one was prepared with details of the facts wherein the importance had consisted.

Some years passed before any clue was found; when it came, it was in quite an accidental way. A visit to an underground cellar, for another purpose, disclosed what, at first, seemed nothing but a basket of commonplace waste paper. A letter had fallen

beside it which was picked up and read. It bore the signature of a nobleman who had been prominent in the early part of the nineteenth century, and it contained expressions of warm interest in the Kildare Place Society's work. This discovery at once suggested the possibility of other similar 'finds.' Examination showed that, mixed with much that was modern and worthless, the basket contained many old letters of value. From this time forward careful and systematic searches were made in all places, no matter how unlikely. The reward was ample. Relics of many kinds—letters, papers, plans, maps, reports, minutes, publications, medals, pieces of educational apparatus—were gradually recovered, and a room was set apart to form a Museum, for their classification and preservation.

As a result it has been possible to compile, from original sources, this hitherto unwritten chapter in the History of Primary Education.

CHAPTER I.

FIRST PLANS FOR POPULAR EDUCATION.

Towards the close of the year 1811, a number of Dublin citizens organised a meeting, with the hope of conferring lasting benefit upon their country, by forming a society for the education of the poor. The resolutions framed on that occasion, the original copy of which now hangs in the Kildare Place Museum, clearly indicate the spirit which animated those present. They run as follows:

Draft of the Original Resolutions Passed at the First Formal Meeting of the Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor of Ireland (Kildare Place Society). December 7th, 1811.

1st. Resolved

That Promoting the Education of the Poor of Ireland is a grand object which every Irishman anxious for the welfare and prosperity of his country ought to have in view as the basis upon which the morals and true happiness of the country can be best secured.

2nd. Resolved

That for the accomplishment of this great work

Schools should be opened upon the most liberal principles and divested of all sectarian distinctions in Christianity.

3rd. Resolved

That to forward this measure we deem it expedient that a Society be formed whose paramount object shall be to promote the Education of *all* the Poor of Ireland, and that it be denominated 'The Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor of Ireland.'

4th. Resolved

That a Committee be appointed annually who shall be intrusted with the management of the Institution (subject, however, to the control of a General Meeting of the Society), the same to consist of twenty-one Members, and that such Committee shall be particularly requested to correspond with and receive communications from all parts of Ireland upon the subject of Education and matters connected with the objects of the Society, and to give information and assistance to Local Associations for the fitting up of School Houses upon a suitable plan and for providing Teachers properly qualified, as also for the procuring of Books and other necessary Articles.

5th. Resolved

That Economy being a Primary consideration in such undertaking, the attention of the Committee is particularly directed to the arrangements made in the several Schools now conducted in this country upon the Lancasterian Plan, which plan is, in our opinion, well calculated for the attainment of the object itself as well as to meet the circumstances of the Poor of Ireland.

6th. Resolved

That a subscription be now opened for Promoting the objects of this Society.

Two features in these resolutions particularly attract attention—their broad toleration and their patriotic enthusiasm. A glance at the composition of the first committee will sufficiently explain why they aimed at opening schools upon the most liberal principles, and divested of all sectarian distinctions.

Samuel Bewley, a merchant, one of the most prominent members, belonged to the Society of Friends. The Guinnesses were represented by two names. At the first General Meeting of the Society Mr. William L. Guinness presided. There were three La Touches, John David, Peter Digges, and Peter, jun. Two of them were sons of the Rt. Hon. David La Touche, a leader in everything that was good at the time.[1] Among the pro-

[1] An authority whose impartiality is beyond suspicion speaks thus of David La Touche and his sons: 'The only person whose claims remain to be considered is the son of David La Touche, a man who was held forth by Henry Grattan, when he presented the Protestant petition in support of the Catholic claims, as representing the commercial and landed interests of Ireland, and whose name did more to remove the prejudices of the English people, and promote the real interests of this country, than has ever been effected by the rivals of his son. The candidate is also the brother of a man whose merits are recorded in the hearts of all that knew him—humane, generous, charitable, patriotic, the best of landlords, the best of friends, the zealous defender of the rights of Ireland, and the protector of her children in the worst of times.'—Dr. Doyle, R.C. Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin—*Life, Times, and Correspondence*, Vol. I. p. 80.

fessional members were Richard B. Warren, afterwards a well-known King's Counsel, and Joseph Devonsher Jackson, Honorary Secretary, the Judge Jackson of later days. There were no religious tests; all denominations were eligible; and many were represented. Members of the Irish Church, Roman Catholics, and Nonconformists joined hands, and laboured zealously together for the common good.

A committee so composed were pledged in advance to principles of liberality and toleration. But if we want to understand how such a committee came to be formed, and what it was that filled them with their earnest desire for education, we must be content to spend a few minutes examining into the circumstances of the time.

Among those who met in that December day in 1811 was one who might without exaggeration be described as the embodiment of the educational thought of the day, so far as schools for the poor were concerned. A Quaker in the form, though scarcely in the neatness of his attire, with an appearance not in any way striking, and a manner and address more romantic than businesslike, there was yet an earnestness and an enthusiasm about him which it was difficult to resist. The details of the story of Joseph Lancaster are foreign to our purpose, but its outlines are so inseparably connected with the educational movement, in which the Kildare Place

Society played a prominent part, that they cannot be omitted.

Born in poor circumstances in 1778, Lancaster early showed at once a fondness for teaching, and an unselfishness which led him to devote himself heart and soul to his pupils. In those days there were no Government grants for elementary education. It followed that the instruction of the poor, if undertaken at all, must be conducted upon the most economical principles. It was the special distinction of Lancaster, and also, quite independently, of Dr. Andrew Bell, a Scotchman, to devise systems, similar as wholes, but differing in details, whereby the poor might be educated at a cost which to modern notions appears either impossible or absurd.[1]

In the working out of his plans Lancaster pressed on from one venture to another, until the small school, in an obscure room, had grown into a great institution, and the few elementary principles into a system complete and elaborately planned. As he advanced, the contagion of his enthusiasm spread. Money came pouring in from every quarter. King George himself gave his patronage. The royal Dukes assumed active parts in the management. Nor was the interest confined to fostering a single institution. Led by the King, who, on the occasion of an interview which he granted to Lancaster, ex-

[1] The cost of each pupil in the Kildare Place Model Schools for the year 1829 was 2s. 5d.—*Report* 19, p. 40.

pressed his views by saying 'it is my wish that every poor child should be taught to read the Scriptures,' men everywhere became eager to promote Primary Education. A demand for schools sprang up in all parts of the kingdom. Lancaster's help and advice were earnestly sought for by those who wished to carry his principles into operation. So urgent, and of so flattering a nature did the demands for his presence become, that he was soon visiting place after place in what resembled a triumphal progress.

In these educational journeyings Scotland and Ireland were included. In Ireland 'Lancasterian Schools,' as they were termed, were founded in Belfast, in Cork, and in other places. As will appear presently, Dublin was already engaged in the work of educating the poor, so that no schools there owed their origin to Lancaster; but he received a cordial welcome from those who were interested in educational work, and his presence at the first meeting of the Education Society gives him a claim to some share in the honour of its foundation. More than this the facts do not sustain. It is true that the Society's principles were marked by the religious toleration which was characteristic of the Lancasterian system. It is true that Lancaster hoped that the Society would bear his name, and that he was much piqued at their unwillingness to do so; it is also true that his somewhat florid imagination so represented

his share in the organisation that the Royal Lancasterian Institution, as the British and Foreign Society was then termed, was for a time disposed to view the Education Society as one of its branches. Claims of this kind were, however, always firmly resisted by the Dublin Society, no matter how influentially they were made. They were resisted, partly because they were without foundation in fact, partly because in the opinion of the Committee an English connexion would be prejudicial to their work. It was a time when attempts of many kinds were being made from England for the amelioration of Ireland. The motives were excellent; but the means were not, as a rule, planned with any sympathy for either the religious feelings or the national temperament of the Irish. The Dublin Committee saw clearly that anything which identified them with efforts of this kind would foredoom them to failure. There is no doubt that Lancaster's presence had helped and perhaps stimulated them. There is no doubt also that they found their opportunity for educational work on a large scale in the general enthusiasm which Lancaster's labours had done so much to evoke; but if the real origin of the Education Society and its principles is to be found, it must be sought for in a movement which began not in London but in Dublin, more than twenty years before Lancaster's Irish tour.

So far back as 1786, before Bell had dreamed of

his system at Madras, before Lancaster had made even his first educational experiments, a school had been founded in St. Catherine's Parish, Dublin, upon principles which were then entirely new. Kind hearts and capable heads were set to work by pity for the condition of the poor. The establishment of an efficient school upon a large scale, appeared to be the means most likely to afford help that would be valuable and permanent. A formidable difficulty, however, had first to be overcome. Religious distinctions have always been accentuated in Ireland. Up to the time we speak of, work among the Roman Catholic poor had generally taken the form of proselytism. The benevolence of Protestants was for this reason an object of common suspicion. In the hope of obviating the difficulty a plan was devised for conducting the proposed school without reference to the interests of any particular persuasion, as the phrase then went. This, it was believed, could be accomplished, if the Bible was read without doctrinal explanation. The attempt was first made on a small scale in a room lent for the purpose in Thomas' Court. It met with immediate success, and soon new and large quarters became a necessity. The result was the erection of the building which is now the West Dublin Model School, on a site which soon came to be known as School Street. Here upwards of a thousand 'scholars' of 'various religious persuasions' were soon in daily attendance, and

by 1811 nearly thirty thousand pupils had been admitted.[1]

More than this, the plan adopted appears not only to have been unopposed, but to have gradually won its way to general approval. The Committee of the School, in their *Report* for 1812,[2] tell us that 'this plan undoubtedly met with the disapprobation of divers persons in times past'; but they add, 'their objections appear gradually wearing away'; and in proof of this statement they give the testimony of a number of visitors to the schools, including bishops and clergy of both the Established and Roman Catholic Churches.

The connexion of the Education Society with the School Street Institution is not left in any doubt. In their second *Report*[3] the Society refer to the School, and expressly assert that the success with which it had solved the religious difficulty had led them to adopt similar principles with the hope of similar success. To complete the evidence, it is only necessary to add that several of the most active members of the Education Society, among whom were Mr. J. D. La Touche, Mr. Peter La Touche, and Mr. S. Bewley, had been 'engaged for years in the support and management' of the School Street School.

Having traced to their origin the tolerant prin-

[1] *Report* 2, App. 1. [2] Quoted, *Report* 2, App. 1.
[3] P. 12 and App. 1.

ciples which the Education Society adopted, our next duty will be to enquire into the circumstances which induced, and made it possible, for a private committee in the year 1811 to contemplate and to develop an educational enterprise of national importance. Whence sprung the patriotic enthusiasm in connexion with education which is so prominent in the foundation resolutions? Neither in England nor Scotland can any true parallel be found. The British and Foreign Society, founded in May, 1811, and the National Society, founded 1812, aimed at sectional rather than national work. In Scotland the old Parochial Schools, which had performed such long and honourable service, had fallen into a state of inefficiency, from which they were roused only by the efforts of individual reformers like Professor Pillans.[1] For the explanation we must look solely to the circumstances of the Ireland of 1811. To reproduce these circumstances, in such a way as to make them understood, is not an easy task. The difficulty arises in part from the prevalent ignorance as to the periods immediately preceding our own; but its most serious aspect is to be found in the vast differences which separate the Ireland of 1904 from the Ireland of 1811. Now the Roman Catholics, almost to a man, are against the Union; the Protestants are its warm supporters. It was by means of the Roman Catholics that the Union of 1800 was

[1] Cf. Pillans, *Principles of Elementary Teaching.*

carried. The leading Protestant nobility and gentry strenuously opposed it. The Hierarchy and the priesthood are now the dominant political power. At the beginning of the nineteenth century the Roman Catholic clergy were 'timid and conservative.' They took no part in politics.[1] It was not till after 1820 that 'the priest cast off altogether the habitual stoop which had so long been the disgraceful distinctive of his order.'[2] Parliamentary representation now, as then, is organised by powers that pay little heed to the views of the electorate. But here the similarity ceases. Now the rulers of the Nationalist party issue their sovereign commands expecting unhesitating obedience. Then the landowners selected the members, and the people submissively surrendered to them their votes. The Irelands of 1904 and 1810 belong in fact to wholly different eras. It is only by grasping this truth firmly that we can begin to realise the circumstances of the earlier time.

With the passing of the Act of Union a new period commenced in Ireland. At first there was much that was hopeful in the situation. The attitude of those who had been opposed to the measure may perhaps be best summed up in the words of Grattan, 'the marriage has been made; let us make it fruitful.' Those who had been favourable were in hopes of

[1] O'Connor Morris, *Ireland from* 1798 *to* 1898, ch. i. p. 15.
[2] Wyse, *Historical Sketch of Catholic Association*, i. p. 239.

reaping the rewards which they had been led to expect. In particular the Roman Catholics believed that Emancipation would be speedily granted, and they looked for substantial benefits, in the shape of grants in aid of the payment of their bishops and clergy.[1] The completeness of the lull may be gauged by the absence of political disturbance. The forces which had shown so menacingly during the closing years of the eighteenth century, now in the volunteers, now in the United Irishmen, now in the rebels of '98, were seen no more. The very impotence and isolation of Emmet's attempt in 1803 only served to mark the general calm more plainly. Such troubles as did exist—and they were neither few nor unimportant—took origin not in political but in social grievances. There was widespread poverty; the desire for holdings led to excessive rents, the effort to pay these rents scarcely left margin for the lowest subsistence. There was also widespread ignorance, which stood in the way of any possible foresight and economy, and had no cures to suggest save agrarian outrage and crime. Nor was there any suitable means at hand for remedying abuses or controlling outbreaks. Until the time of Sir Robert Peel, who became Chief Secretary in 1812, no adequate police force existed. The administration of justice, so far as the magistrates were concerned, was defective in

[1] Lecky, *Ireland in the Eighteenth Century*, vol. v. p. 436. *Castlereagh Correspondence*, iv., pp. 227-229.

principle, and often one-sided in application.[1] Formidable as these difficulties were, they were yet of a kind which peculiarly invited treatment at the hand of the power that had made itself responsible. This was clearly enough recognised at the time. Not only had the Roman Catholics been led to expect political emancipation, and subsidies for their clergy, but Pitt had intended to accompany these measures with an Act for the commutation of tithes. Had the English Government devoted itself seriously to the consolidation of the Union, by the passing of these and similar measures, it is probable that a contented and loyal Ireland would have been their reward; it is certain that much of the discontent which has had such formidable results, all through the century, would never have appeared. Unhappily the golden opportunity was allowed to pass unutilised. Emancipation not only was not granted, but, so far as the Government was concerned, it was forced further and further into the background, till at last, under O'Connell, the nation rose, and wrested from unwilling hands the privileges it was no longer possible to withhold. It was the same with the tithes. The tithe system was generally allowed to be the most fertile of the sources of Irish anarchy; yet tithe commutation was indefinitely postponed, and it was not until 1838 that the Tithe Bill was carried.

[1] *Personal Recollections of Lord Cloncurry*, ch. ix. p. 197 and *seq.* Cf. also *Two Centuries of Irish History*, pt. iii. ch. ii. p. 263.

Well may Mr. Lecky say in reference to it, 'it is impossible not to reflect with bitterness how different might have been the course of Irish history if even this one boon had accompanied or closely followed the Union.'[1]

Even worse, perhaps, was the negligence which omitted the elementary duty of ascertaining the condition of the country, for whose management the Government had made themselves responsible. Over and over again the necessity for a thorough investigation was pressed in Parliament by members familiar with Ireland. But the year 1825 had come before the necessary steps for inquiry were taken.[2] Too truly has it been said that for the first twenty-five years of the century Ireland was governed blindfold, the only resort when difficulties arose being the passing or renewal of Coercion Acts, the only prominent feature in the ruling policy being the devotion shown to the worst features of the so-called Protestant Ascendancy.[3]

In a country so situated, with suffering, which was often acute, on the one hand, and an absence of remedial government measures on the other, it was natural that there should be found private individuals who were willing to bestir themselves for the public

[1] Lecky, *Ireland in the Eighteenth Century*, v. p. 473.

[2] *Two Centuries of Irish History*, pt. iii. ch. i.

[3] *Personal Recollections of Lord Cloncurry*, ch. ix. O'Connor Morris, *Ireland from* 1798 *to* 1898, ch. iii. pp. 81-83.

good. The method which commonly commended itself as likely to be most efficacious, was the formation of Societies with specific objects, for which they raised and administered funds. In the early years of the century many societies sprang up ; some worked from Ireland, others from England, one at least from Scotland. Some had committees both in Ireland and England. The objects were as varied as the localities. Some carried forward the traditional policy of endeavouring to convert the Roman Catholics ; others were educational. Of these, some lived in the hope that the education and the conversion of the Roman Catholics were more or less synonymous terms. Such were the London Hibernian Society, founded 1806, which made the Bible the text-book of its schools; and, in a lesser degree, the Irish Society, founded 1818, which taught the reading of Holy Scripture in the Irish language. Others were more liberal in their views, as for instance, the Sunday School Society, founded 1809, and the Association for Promoting Christian Knowledge, which dated as far back as 1792.

With examples of this kind before them, it was natural that those who thought the School Street work capable of expansion into National proportions, should proceed to form for the purpose 'A Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor of Ireland.'

As has been said, one of the chief misfortunes from which Ireland suffered at this time was ignor-

ance. All authorities agree as to the marked zeal for learning which characterises the Irish poor, and as to the difficulties under which they have been willing to pursue knowledge. But no zeal could overcome the absence of provision for education which prevailed before the Education Society began its work.

So far as can be ascertained, the total number of schools of all descriptions did not amount to 5000 in 1812,[1] a time when the population was much in excess of what it is at present. The accommodation was commonly of the most inadequate description. Mud-floored cabins, sometimes without chimneys or even windows, formed the schools. Stones or sods were used for seats. Often there were no desks but the pupil's knees. The sole object of the teachers, who were sometimes nearly paupers, was to instruct in Reading, Writing, and Arithmetic. 'Cleanliness of person, decency of language, and regularity of conduct were totally neglected. The books used were sometimes of the most pernicious tendency.'[2] There was no 'Method,' and no 'Order.' The little that was learned was acquired at the expense of an extraordinary sacrifice of time. The universal lack of discipline bore everywhere the worst possible fruits.[3]

[1] Fourteenth Report of the Commissioners of Education.

[2] Cf. p. 214, where lists of books used are given.

[3] Second *Report*, pp. 10 and 11: Correspondence *passim*.

It was with the hope of remedying this deplorable state of affairs that the leading men of the School Street Committee, together with others of kindred spirit, banded themselves together in December, 1811, and founded the Society which was destined to confer such lasting benefits on education in general, and on Irish education in particular.

CHAPTER II.

EARLY YEARS—UNIVERSAL APPROVAL.

We now proceed to follow the fortunes of the Education Society from the foundation, in December, 1811, to the withdrawal of the Government grants in 1831. We have glanced at the circumstances, educational and political, which made possible an enterprise of the kind. We go on to deal with the gradual but sure process of development, which led, from small beginnings, to the attainment of a truly national system. In this portion of our history only the main current of events will come under notice. Part II. will be devoted to a detailed treatment of the educational methods which the Society devised and employed.

The earliest public efforts of the Committee, which the Society appointed to carry on its business, were directed towards enlisting sympathy, and obtaining financial support. In the first of these aims they were eminently successful. Men of all shades of opinion

united in their commendation. Mr. Thos. Parnell, one of the members, writing to 'The Chairman of the Committee,' Jan. 3, 1812, was able to say, 'I this day met Mr. Finn, who mentioned to me that himself and Counsellor O'Connell had wished to communicate to our Committee their desire to interest themselves in the work which we have undertaken, and Mr. Finn seemed to express his sentiments as those of the principal Catholics.' So general was the approval, that the Committee were able to report 'the improvements lately introduced into the systems for the education of the poor have become the subject of discussion among the enlightened, and even the theme of conversation among the fashionable, and whenever mentioned every tongue seems eager to expatiate upon the happy consequences which must result.' [1]

Nor was official sanction wanting. A Government Commission on education had been appointed in 1806. In their final report the Commissioners recommended the introduction of a system of education which would be acceptable to all classes. The plan they sketched was so much in accord with that of the Education Society that it amounted to an endorsement of their principle; indeed the Government of the day found an excuse for not carrying out the recommendations of the Commissioners, in the fact that the conditions they

[1] *Report* 2, p. 23.

had laid down were so well fulfilled by the Education Society.[1]

Thus on every hand the proposals and the exertions of the Committee met with recognition and commendation. It is so still. Even those who condemn their subsequent conduct are warm in praise of their first efforts. 'In 1811,' says Mr. Barry O'Brien,[2] 'there were Protestants in Ireland who . . . condemned the (educational) policy, which had been instrumental in bringing it (*i.e.* the ignorance of the Roman Catholics and the hatred of English rule) about. The time had come, in the opinion of those Protestants, when a really honest and persevering effort should be made to educate the Irish Catholics without further attempting to convert them to Protestantism.'

But while everyone praised, few thought it their duty to subscribe. Most strenuous efforts were used to bring the needs of the work under the notice of all classes. The response was meagre in the extreme. Resolutions from Grand Juries, and such like sympathetic support abounded; but the needed cash remained in the pockets of its owners. The subscriptions for the first three years did not amount to an average of £500 per annum. To use their own bitter expression, the Committee had 'to toil in

[1] Speech of Sir R. Peel in House of Commons, June 16, 1815, quoted below, p. 32.

[2] *Fifty Years of Concession to Ireland*, pp. 115-116.

fetters.' It was no wonder they complained of the lamentable apathy which they experienced, and expressed their inability to continue, unless the required funds became available.

That they toiled at all under the circumstances may well excite our wonder. But toil they did, and this without ever losing sight of their comprehensive aim. Through lack of funds they were unable to undertake a large scheme of publication. They did not, however, hesitate to pay upwards of £100 to Joseph Lancaster for the right to reissue his educational works. A small pamphlet, or 'little tract' as they called it, was the only immediate result; nevertheless, it proved a firm foundation for all that came afterwards. For the same reason they could make no permanent provision for supplying Teachers; but they commenced the work of training in the school in School Street, and engaged as their superintendent Mr. John Veevers, who had already established an unrivalled reputation; and this, though they had to make themselves responsible for a salary which was nearly half their income.

In connexion with the appointment of J. Veevers an incident occurred, interesting in itself on account of the friendly relations between the promoters of education in London and Dublin which it discloses, but especially valuable for our purpose because of the clear light it throws upon the policy and motives of the Education Society.

So soon as it seemed possible to employ an official of the kind, application was made to the Royal Lancasterian, soon to become the British and Foreign School Society. J. Veevers was their nominee. But Veevers was already engaged in remunerative work in Birmingham, and his price was for those days high. In the negotiations that followed, the Education Society made it plain that £200 per annum was their extreme figure. As this was not sufficient, the London Committee gave practical expression to their interest in the Dublin work by adding another £100.

The first intimation which the Committee in Dublin had of this arrangement was conveyed nearly two years after the appointment by a paragraph from the report of the British and Foreign Society, which appeared in the *British Press*. No time was lost in taking action, and the following letter was addressed to Mr. Joseph Fox, the Secretary of the London Society :

Sir,

A printed account of the recent meeting of the British and Foreign School Society, and of the report stated to have been read by you, as secretary, at the meeting, having been seen by the Committee of the Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor of Ireland, I have been directed to communicate with you relative to those passages of the report which allude to our Society.

In the introductory part of the report our Society is mentioned amongst several provincial institutions in England as emanating from your Society, and in a subsequent para-

graph it is intimated that we derive some support from your funds.

Though our Committee are desirous to co-operate and communicate with every institution having for its object in any degree the diffusion of education throughout Ireland, yet there are reasons of a very cogent nature for avoiding an actual union or even a close connexion with any other Society which does not occupy in every respect the same neutral ground. This country is very peculiarly circumstanced indeed, and it requires extreme caution on the part of those who are concerned in promoting the education of its lower orders, to avoid giving offence or exciting jealousy amongst them, or amongst the upper classes from whom support is to be derived.... Conscious that the slightest connexion with any party, either religious or political, or even a suspicion of such connexion, would be fatal to the grand object of the Society, the Committee have therefore professed and observed the strictest neutrality on these points, and having experienced the good effects of so doing, in the increasing confidence and approbation of the public, they are most anxious to preserve the character which they hope they have established.

Your excellent institution has been connected with Mr. Lancaster, and the denomination which it lately bore, has proclaimed that connexion throughout the British Empire. The ideas of attachment to the Established Church on the one hand, and of opposition to it on the other, are associated in the public mind (however unjustly) with the names of Bell and Lancaster. The Committee have therefore found it absolutely necessary to keep themselves distinct from both, though they are perfectly sensible of the obligations which the friends of National Education are under to each of them. For this cause alone, it is, that our Committee regret that

the Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor of Ireland should have been represented in your report as being a branch of your Society.

Your report has made it also necessary to say a few words respecting the reasons which induced the Committee to invite Mr. Veevers to Ireland, and as to the situation which he fills in their establishment. They were desirous to avail themselves of the experience of all persons who had devoted their attention to the business of education, in order that they might be enabled to select or combine such a system as should be best adapted to the wants and circumstances of Ireland, without regard to the name or party from which valuable information might be derived. Mr. Veevers having been highly recommended by some individuals of your Society, as being perfectly acquainted with the Lancasterian system, our Committee agreed to give him a salary of £200 per annum whilst they required his services, and in so doing they conceived that they were giving him adequate remuneration, nor had they the least idea that he desired any compensation from any other quarter until your report announced that fact to them. Upon his arrival here an adequate proportion of the scholars at the School Street establishment was placed under Mr. Veevers's care, in order that he might exhibit his system, and the Committee have it still under consideration whether and what part of it shall be engrafted on the system which had been acted upon at School Street for many years before he arrived here. In the meantime, however, his division serves as the Model School of the Society, and as the temporary seminary for training masters.

The Committee trust that the managers of your Society will do justice to the motives in which this communication has originated by believing that it does not proceed from a

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petty spirit of rivalry, or an affectation of independence upon their part, but from a sincere desire to conduct the concerns of the institution committed to their care in such a manner as to avoid the numerous difficulties which oppose themselves to the establishment of a general system of education for the poor of Ireland.

I have the honor to be, Sir,

etc., etc.,

J. D. Jackson, Sec.

Dublin, 12th Dec., 1814.

To Joseph Fox, Esq.,

Sec. to the British and Foreign School Society, London.

As the result of this letter the subvention to J. Veevers came to an end. But another attempt, and that of a specially influential character, was soon to be made upon the independence of the Society. In reply to a request for his patronage, his Royal Highness, the Duke of Kent, wrote as follows :

(*Copy.*)

Kensington Palace, 2nd March, 1815.

Captain Harvey, of the Royal Scots, Private Secretary to the Duke of Kent, is instructed by His Royal Highness to acknowledge Mr. Jackson's letter of the 22nd ulto., enclosing the rules and regulations of the Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor of Ireland, in which he also communicates the wish of the friends of that institution that His Royal Highness should become their patron, and to inform him, in reply to this request, that the Duke, considering himself in his capacity of Vice-Patron of the British and Foreign School Society, to be bound to afford his countenance to all attempts to promote

universal education, wherever the principles and influence of the system upon which that is conducted may be extended, His Royal Highness cannot hesitate in assenting to the wish Mr. Jackson has expressed, when he perceives that the Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor of Ireland is established on the same liberal plan, which is everywhere so important, but in Ireland absolutely indispensable: to this Captain Harvey is directed to add, that as the British and Foreign School Society must be considered as the *parent* institution of every other establishment which practises the same system, the Duke will feel a peculiar pleasure, when he presides in the chair at the *General* Meeting held in London for the purpose of receiving the annual reports, in seeing the progress made by the Irish Society form a prominent feature in the same; and that the Duke of Kent trusts the Committee for its management will assist him in identifying its interests with those of the Parent Institution to the utmost of their ability, it being of such essential importance to the cause of education generally, which is conducted upon the broadest principles of religious toleration, that the British and Foreign School Society should receive the most cordial support from every other that emanates from it, and acts on the same system.

Joseph Devonsher Jackson, Esq.

To the request contained in the letter the Committee made the following answer:

Dublin, 18th March, 1815.

Sir,

I beg leave to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 2nd inst., which I have laid before the Committee of the Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor of Ireland, and am directed by them to convey, through

you, to His Royal Highness the grateful sense they entertain of his gracious acquiescence in their request that H.R.H. should become the Patron of the Society.

The Committee are no less sensible of the zeal for promoting universal education and for the welfare of the Irish Society in particular, which has influenced H.R.H. so strongly to recommend that our Society should be identified with the British and Foreign School Society; but they beg leave to state to H.R.H. that they have been recently engaged in a correspondence with the Committee of that Society, upon the very subject, in the course of which correspondence they have pointed out the circumstances which led to the foundation of this Society, and the fact of its being in its commencement, and having hitherto continued, perfectly distinct from any other institution, and they have also endeavoured to satisfy the Committee of the British and Foreign School Society that the cause of education in Ireland would greatly suffer, and that the influence and consequent utility of our Society would considerably diminish even by the appearance of being identified with any institution supposed to have been connected with or to have adopted the opinions of either Dr. Bell or Mr. Lancaster.

* * * * * * * * * *

I am, however, directed to add that our Society will ever feel grateful to H.R.H. for any suggestions with which he may be pleased to honor them, and that although for the reasons above alluded to they are unwilling to appear before the Public connected with the British and Foreign School Society in the relation of Parent and Child, yet they will be happy at all times to act with them as Brothers, and to co-operate with them in their views so far as is consistent with the peculiar interests and objects

of the Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor of Ireland.

I have the honor to be, Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

J. D. JACKSON, Secretary.

To CAPTAIN HARVEY, etc., etc.

It is to the Duke's credit that the independence and firmness of the Education Society did not interfere with his kind intentions. He was, however, tenacious of his purpose, and, in replying, he urged that the British and Foreign Society should be allowed to publish in their Report an abstract of 'what was done under the Irish one.'

To this request the Committee acceded, but they did so in a way which emphasised, instead of abandoning, their independence—'They would feel gratified if their Reports can be made useful by the highly respectable Society alluded to by His Royal Highness, or by any other Society engaged in forwarding the same object. . . . With the same view they would wish and venture to hope that they may be favoured in return with copies of the Report of the British and Foreign School Society.'

The invitation which the Education Society had addressed to the Duke of Kent marked a new departure in their policy. Commencing as a body of Dublin citizens, they had at first avoided the prevalent custom of soliciting the patronage of rank and fashion. Profoundly impressed with the 'grandeur'

of the object they had in view, they believed that educational efficiency, coupled with strict impartiality, would secure all necessary support. Only when all further progress was barred by the inadequacy of their funds, did they consent to the glitter of a Patron and Vice-Patrons, a President and Vice-Presidents. The success which attended their invitations, when at last they were issued, shows the high estimation in which their work was held. The Duchess of Dorset and the Duke of Leinster became Vice-Patrons. Among the earliest Vice-Presidents were the Marquis of Thomond, the Earls of Fingal and Charlemont, Viscounts Southwell and De Vesci.

The following is the letter in which the Duke of Leinster accepted office :

(*Copy.*)

CARTON, Jan. 8th, 1815.

Sir,

I shall be extremely proud to be a Vice-Patron of the Society for promoting the Education of the Poor in Ireland, which I have long considered as a most necessary Institution to be formed in this Country.

I have the Honour to be, Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

(Signed) LEINSTER.

The distinguished names thus added to the Society did something towards the increase of the funds—not enough. Slowly and reluctantly the Committee were driven to the conclusion that no course was open but to accept aid from the State. The phrase 'accept

aid' may seem curious in this connexion. Such aid is generally very perseveringly sought. It was otherwise with the Education Society. When it was first suggested to them, from an influential source, that help of the kind was to be had, they shrank from availing themselves of the offer. Instinctively they foresaw the dangers involved—on the one hand restricted freedom, on the other accentuated jealousy and unrestricted criticism. It was not till every other available resource had been exhausted that at last, in the spring of 1815, a petition for Parliamentary aid was presented. In the first instance help was asked only for the building of a model school, with residences for the staff, and offices. The Society had now been upwards of three years in existence; their annual meetings had been held in hired public rooms; the Committee had met where they could; their sales of school requisites, and their publishing work, were carried on in temporary premises; and for the training of teachers they were wholly dependent upon the goodwill of their friends at School Street. In order to remedy a state of affairs so unsatisfactory, it was imperatively necessary to secure, for their own use, a suitable site, and to erect upon it suitable buildings. The site was found in Kildare Place. Situated between St. Stephen's Green and Leinster House, at that time the town residence of the Duke of Leinster, its publicity promised to secure for the operations of the Society the prominence which they

deemed essential. The insufficiency of the school accommodation in the district made it certain that there would be no difficulty about pupils.

It was proposed to plan the buildings with a view to exhibiting, in the most complete way possible, the educational ideals of the time. To purchase the site, and erect the buildings, a sum of £6980 would be required. For this sum Parliament was petitioned, and within a month of the presentation of the petition the money was voted.

In connexion with this step, there are two points which need to be emphasised, if the subsequent history of the Society is to be understood.

The petitioners on their part laid down in the plainest language the fundamental principles which formed their charter, viz., education for 'all classes of professing Christians, without interfering with the peculiar religious opinions of any . . . the Scripture without note or comment to be used, excluding all catechisms and books of religious controversy.'[1]

The Government and Parliament on their part had these principles clearly before them in all they did. Mr., afterwards Sir Robert Peel, was Chief Secretary. Contemporary testimony is unanimous as to the zeal with which he devoted himself to his duties. In particular, he was interested in the prospects and hopes which the education of the people held out.

[1] The Humble Petition of the Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor of Ireland, dated May 24, 1815.

The recommendations of the Commissioners in their fourteenth Report won his approval. His only hesitation about carrying them into operation arose from a fear lest they should be foredoomed to failure, if too closely associated with English rule. This difficulty appeared to be absent where the Education Society were concerned. They were Irish. They were of all creeds. They stood aside from politics. In constitution they appeared to offer exactly the required organisation. Their steady progress in public approval seemed to promise a popularity which would ensure success. Under all these circumstances it was natural that the Society should have been encouraged to seek parliamentary assistance, and equally natural that the Chief Secretary should himself advocate their cause.

Upon the introduction of the Irish Budget by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Vesey Fitzgerald, June 16, 1815, Mr. Peel, speaking in favour of a grant to the Education Society, said that no man could be more sensible than himself of the advantages which would result to Ireland from the general diffusion of education . . . when they considered the avidity which was general by the lower orders of the population of Ireland to avail themselves of any means of instruction that were afforded them it would be a reflection on Parliament if by any ill-judged and miserable parsimony such means were withheld,

The last Report of the Commissioners suggested a general plan for educating the people.

The Report recommended the Lord Lieutenant to appoint Commissioners for the superintendence of the Education. He was afraid that this direct interference by the Executive Government would tend to excite jealousies that would counteract the benefits that might otherwise be expected from the measure. He therefore felt warranted in forbearing to introduce to Parliament the system recommended by the Commissioners. He conceived, however, that the vote which his right honourable friend meant to promote would by no means involve the evils which he had just described. He was convinced, and he avowed it without hesitation or reserve, that the only national plan of education in Ireland was one which should be exceptionally impartial to children of all religious persuasions—one which did not profess to make converts—one which, while it imparted general religious instruction, left those who were its objects to obtain their particular religious discipline elsewhere.

To the slow and gradual progress of reform among the people of Ireland Parliament must look for a durable improvement in their character; and he could not conceive a more certain mode of effecting this most important object than by adopting a judicious plan of education.

As the result of this advocacy, the vote was passed without opposition. It was a step of importance not

alone for the Society and for Ireland, but for primary education everywhere. Many years were to elapse before the education of the poor was recognised generally as an imperial duty. England and Scotland had to wait before their claims were allowed. But the vote of June 1815 prepared the way for all subsequent developments. The credit of that vote must be assigned to Sir Robert Peel.

CHAPTER III.

THE WORK AND THE WORKERS.

The time has now come for a closer consideration of the task which the Education Society proposed to themselves. We have seen them commencing with high hopes, and with the approval of all sections of the public. The original resolutions,[1] on which the enterprise was founded, give the principles which had been deemed essential from the first. In the eyes of the Society the schools described in the second resolution as 'schools divested of all sectarian distinctions in Christianity' meant schools in which the Bible was read without note or comment. Parliament, under the leadership of Peel, endorsed this view, and for a time it won general acceptance.

As, however, it was against this particular feature in the Society's constitution that subsequent criticism was chiefly directed, it will be right to introduce the account of the work, by allowing the workers to speak for themselves with reference to principles

[1] See p. 1.

which they held so dear, and to which they clung so tenaciously.

In their first Report they say that they desire 'to afford the same advantages for Education to all classes of professing Christians without interfering with the peculiar religious opinions of any.'

They proceed to explain how, in their opinion, they may best accomplish this object. 'Guided by this principle, the Society conceived that the most efficient means for attaining their object would be to promote the establishment of Schools, wherein the Poor might be instructed in reading, writing, and arithmetic upon a cheap and expeditious plan; where the appointment of governors, teachers, and scholars should be uninfluenced by sectarian distinctions; and in which the *Scriptures without note or comment* should be used to the exclusion of all catechisms and books of religious controversy. As all denominations of Christians profess that the sacred Scriptures are the criterions by which they desire to have their peculiar tenets examined, the Society determined rigidly to adhere to this part of their plan, looking forward to it with confidence, as affording the only true and solid foundation which can be laid for the moral and religious education of the great body of the people of Ireland.'[1]

Thus, in the clearest way, the Society laid down that for them, non-interference with denominational

[1] *Report* 1, p. 4.

distinctions, and reading the Scriptures without note or comment were synonymous. It was no theoretical conclusion: on the contrary, they believed that its soundness had been indisputably proved by experience.

'For upwards of twenty years has this harmonious principle been faithfully adhered to in the School in School Street, with the best effects, and other schools have been of late years established upon a similar plan. . . . The happiest results have uniformly flowed from a perseverance in this system. . . . attendance at such schools is not only not impeded, but is warmly approved of and recommended to their respective flocks by the clergy of different denominations.'[1]

So fortified, they took the principle and its application, and enshrined them in the heart of their system. The two paragraphs quoted above from the first Report were shaped into binding laws, from which there was no appeal. They continued to hold this position throughout the history of the Society. With the wisdom or unwisdom of the policy thus deliberately adopted, we are not at present concerned. We do desire to emphasise the fact that the principles that afterwards were so bitterly attacked, were identical with those which at the outset were received with approval on every side.

For the carrying out of their fundamental principles the Committee proposed to themselves plans, which

[1] *Report* 3, p. 20.

from the first were broad and comprehensive. Indications of this have already been before us both in the original resolutions[1] and also in the early steps taken, such as the purchase of J. Lancaster's works and the engagement of J. Veevers. We must now endeavour to view the educational needs of Ireland as a whole as they appeared to the Committee, and to present in outline the methods they devised for their supply.

As they looked round and gathered information from all quarters, it seemed plain that the prevalent ignorance of the people was sufficiently accounted for by the absence of schools. Where schools did exist they were generally unsuitable. For the most part, there were no schools at all. It was natural, therefore, that the first object of the Society should be to help in the founding of schools. The interest which had been aroused on the subject of education had set many people wondering how they might themselves encourage school work. The Society at once determined to supply all needful information as to how to build, and how to furnish, schoolhouses upon the most approved method; and they aimed at being able to provide liberal contributions in aid.

Very little, however, would be accomplished if only walls and furniture were called into existence. What was to be done with the pupils—'scholars' they were called—who would come flocking in? According to

[1] See resolutions 3 and 4, p. 2.

what methods were they to be taught? Who was to teach them? The disorder which prevailed in existing schools, and the incompetence of existing teachers, made these very pressing considerations. The solution proposed was to establish in Dublin a school which would exhibit a model of the most approved methods of teaching, and which would also serve as a Training School for Teachers.

The plan as sketched thus far was certainly sufficiently extensive. To co-operate in building and furnishing schools, to organise a Model School, to initiate the work of training teachers—to act as pioneers in any one of these great works might seem sufficient for a single society. But the Education Society sought nothing less than the occupation of the whole field; and they pursued their object, quite undeterred by the fact that for them there were no models, that in everything they did they had to break new ground for themselves. In an especial degree this was the case with the further developments which their enterprise suggested. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, school-books, in the strict sense, could scarcely be said to exist. Such as came nearest to answering to this description were inaccessible to the poor, owing to their price. Societies like the London Hibernian made good the deficiency by insisting on the use of the Bible as a text-book for all purposes. The hedge schools employed anything that came to hand. Each pupil

provided what he could, and very strange were the collections which sometimes resulted.[1] All this the Education Society determined to alter by themselves publishing, and selling at reasonable rates, the books and appliances which the schools required.

With the production of proper books everything necessary for opening good schools seemed to be provided. Buildings, furniture, educational models, trained teachers, suitable books, had all been considered. Excellent machinery was ready for work; but how was it to be kept going? Plainly the Society must have some means of knowing accurately what progress the schools made, if they were to be able to apply, as might be necessary, either censure or reward. With this object it was determined to organise a system of school inspection. By means of their inspectors the Society believed they might keep in close touch with the schools.

Finally, it seemed right not to leave out of account the leisure hours, both before, and after leaving school. Education would be of little profit if it stopped at the schoolroom. The capacity for reading acquired there ought to develop into a taste for reading elsewhere. To accomplish this, it was decided to attach interesting and instructive libraries to each school. Nothing suitable of the kind was in the market. The Committee early made preparation for publishing the necessary books.

[1] See p. 214.

Nor were the Education Society satisfied when they had planned out the course which they proposed to pursue themselves. Strongly convinced of the value of their own fundamental principle, they exhibited no jealousy of other workers in the same field. On the contrary, they were willing to interest themselves in anything and everything that pertained to the education of the poor, always provided that the funds entrusted to their care were confined to schools conducted on their own system. Once satisfied on this particular, they extended a welcome and a helping hand to all who came. Their books at the reduced rates, which barely covered the cost of production, were available everywhere. Their Training School was thrown open to properly recommended teachers, no matter what their schools, provided they or their patrons were willing to pay their share of the expense. Their Inspectors were encouraged to visit any school upon their route which showed a willingness to receive them. Their office was made a bureau of educational enquiry and information, to which correspondents from all parts of Ireland were encouraged to apply.

Some of the workers with whom the above plans originated are mentioned in Chapter I, in order to illustrate the comprehensive way in which the work was undertaken. In addition there were other prominent Irishmen, whose connexion with the Society deserves to be remembered. James

and Edward Scott were members almost from the beginning. Richard J. Orpen was an original member. He was soon joined by R. J. T. Orpen and Dr. C. H. Orpen. Much work was done by M. A. Saurin and Sergeant Lefroy. Henry Hamilton was indefatigable in his attendance. Most valuable political assistance and advice were given by John Leslie Foster, who represented the University of Dublin in Parliament, was one of the Commissioners of Educational Enquiry, and afterwards became Baron Foster.

All these and many more laboured with singular unanimity in a cause to which they were devoted, and in which they implicitly believed. As a proof of the harmony which prevailed, it may be mentioned that it was the custom to re-elect the same Committee year after year, merely replacing those who, owing to death or any other cause, were unable to continue. No case of the resignation of a member of Committee from disapproval of the policy of the Society, or its administration has been discovered. The exact part which each individual took in the work cannot now be ascertained with any certainty. The letters which survive, while they bear glowing testimony to the interest, the hopes, and the zeal of the writers, are generally silent as to what the members severally contributed. Perhaps this is as it should be. One of the marked features of the Kildare Place

work is the absence of the personal element. All felt that a great enterprise lay before them. Each was ready to bear his share of the burden, as occasion demanded or opportunity allowed.

But while this is so with reference to the majority of the Committee there are two figures which, as it were in spite of themselves, stand out. No account of the Education Society would be complete which did not make some attempt to do justice to the leadership of Samuel Bewley and Joseph Devonsher Jackson. Both were present at the birth of the Society They conducted it to its period of splendid prosperity. They were still its leaders when the final blow fell.

Of Samuel Bewley not a great deal is known outside of his labours in the Education cause. Born about 1760, a member of the Society of Friends, he seems to have been early impressed with the importance of providing education for the Irish people. 'Thy darling object education' is the phrase used to him by a correspondent. We have seen him working out at School Street the local experiment which was to take a national form at Kildare Place. Once the Education Society was founded he appears to have spared neither time nor money in its cause. To him in particular the broad undenominational basis was probably due. He certainly championed it with whole-hearted earnestness whenever the occasion arose.

His intimacy with Joseph Lancaster was responsible for much in the form which the educational activities of the Society assumed. His business experience and capacity made him invaluable in finance and office organisation. At first he undertook the whole management and superintendence of the accounts. How he succeeded may be gathered from his examination before the Commission of Education Inquiry.[1] Asked if any sums had ever been disallowed to the Society by the Commisioners of imprest accounts, he replied, 'Nothing except some very small fractions, . . . there has been no disallowance upon principle; there were some errors in calculation.' Upon a subsequent occasion he handed in the exact amount of the disallowances, 6d. and 20s. for 1817, 1s. 1½d. for 1818, 1s. for 1810, £3 3s. 4d. for 1820, nothing for 1821, 1822, 1823, 1824. The expenditure for these years rose as high as £17,000, and was never less than £8000. In addition he took a special interest in the publishing work of the Society. One of its books was largely the result of his labours. He devoted himself at all times to the work of revising and correcting. Among the numerous clerks he was known as 'longheaded Sam Bewley.' His fellow-members of the Committee looked to him as one on whose intelligence and attention they could always calculate. 'On this occasion,' wrote Mr.

[1] Appendix to Final Report, June 3rd, 1825, No. 203.

Jackson, 'as well as on all others he is entitled to the thanks of the Society, and the gratitude of the public.' It is worthy of note that he did not long survive the ruin of the cause to which the best efforts of his life were given. His name appears for the last time in the report which announces the withdrawal of the government grants. It is as if life had no interest for him when the prosperity of the Kildare Place Society was gone.

Of Joseph Devonsher Jackson a fuller account is possible. Outside the Kildare Place records little can be ascertained about Samuel Bewley. But Mr. Jackson, both as a member of Parliament and as a Judge, established a permanent reputation.

The son of Strettell Jackson, whose residence was Peterborough, near Cork, young Jackson entered Trinity College in November, 1800. Here he rapidly arrested attention, not alone for his talents and the distinctions he obtained, but for the sterling excellence of his character. His College tutor writing of him in 1836 says:

'Thirty-six years ago was confided to my care a youth of distinguished talents, whom, if I were to have been called upon to name one pre-eminent amongst the students for candour and nobleness of disposition, excellent as so many of them were, I should have selected. He was all truth, sincerity and honor, and a bright example of filial and fraternal love and duty. My admiration of his virtues increased

throughout the course of his education at the University, and left an indelible impression on my heart.'

Called to the Irish Bar in 1806, Mr. Jackson rapidly obtained an extensive practice. He became a King's Counsellor in 1826, and in 1830 he was appointed Chairman of the Quarter Sessions, *i.e.* County Court Judge, for the County of Londonderry, where, for the five years that he presided, he gave great satisfaction to the magistracy of the County, and to the suitors of the Court.

While he was presiding in his Court on a December day in 1834, a communication destined to alter the course of his life was handed in. The borough of Bandon had sent to invite him to represent it in Parliament. Hitherto the Chairman had abstained from politics. His conscience forbade the questionable practices so commonly employed with a view to securing election. His heart led him to devote himself to education, and to all other measures planned for the improvement of the condition of the poor. More than once he had declined invitations similar to that now before him. The electors of Bandon, however, were not to be denied; they urged that the necessities of the times called urgently for such services as men of his type could give; and they pledged themselves to return him without permitting the expenditure of a shilling to influence votes. An invitation so conveyed was felt to be a call of duty. The chairmanship was resigned, and Mr. Jackson

entered upon political life in 1835. He was soon after appointed, in succession, Third Sergeant-at-Law and Second Sergeant-at-Law in Ireland.

A contemporary has thus described him as he appeared in the House of Commons:

'With respect to the personal appearance of Sergeant Jackson, it may be said that his countenance is intellectually severe in its outline, but its expression is kind and benignant. His style of oratory is simple and concise, and strictly free from rhetorical artifice. Preserving at all times a most courteous demeanour, he never hesitates to speak in plain terms the plain truth; and there is no gentleman in the House of Commons less likely to be driven from his purpose by threats, or deterred by invective. This his opponents have found, and he is consequently listened to with attention, although, on some subjects, with evident uneasiness. He states his own case in a manly manner, and, if possible, in a style still more manly, the case of his adversary. Attempts, from whatever quarter they may proceed, to mislead by garbled accounts, or divert by sophism, find in him a remorseless and unrelenting foe. Quick to detect a fallacy, he is prompt and decisive in exposing it; and although the House of Commons may boast of orators more florid in their style, we very much doubt whether it has one more uniformly argumentative.'

Such a description explains why, in those stormy times, it was soon found good policy to make a

practice of putting him up to answer O'Connell. It also illuminates the sobriquet which O'Connell hurled at his doughty foe when he styled him the 'leather-lunged Sergeant.' By its help we can understand that the Member for Dublin University, Dr. Lefroy, did not exaggerate when, speaking from his place in the House, he said of him, 'There does not exist a greater ornament to his profession.'

Sergeant Jackson's political career was not destined to be prolonged. In 1841 he was elected Member for Dublin University. The same year he became Attorney-General, and in 1842 he was elevated to the Bench as Judge of the Common Pleas.

As Judge he well maintained the high professional reputation which he had already won, and the force of his character and example made themselves widely felt. He had much success in moderating the excessive conviviality which prevailed on circuit, and in attracting to wiser ways those who were capable of profiting by his influence. A marked feature of his character was his devotion to the study of Holy Scripture. The man who could tolerate no education from which the Bible was excluded, carried out himself the principle he desired to apply to others. As they drove together in the carriage which brought the Judge to the Assizes, his Registrar was continually employed in the task—a congenial task to him—of reading aloud. Nothing was ever permitted to interfere with this practice. As the old man lay

in his last illness—it had been brought on by excessive devotion to duty—the Doctor imperatively forbade reading of any kind. But the Judge was not to be denied. No sooner was the Doctor gone than he said, 'At any rate read me the Scriptures; they never did me any harm.'

Mr. Jackson's special department in connexion with the Education Society was the Correspondence Committee.[1] It is, however, impossible, to think of him as confined to any single branch of organisation. Through his hands passed all the broad questions of policy, all the difficult negotiations, on the one hand with the Government who supported, on the other with the critics who attacked. Upon him as honorary secretary naturally devolved the drawing up of the elaborate Reports, which are our chief authorities for the history of the Society. His, as a rule, were the various state papers which were continually called for by the changes in the political world. In him all the varied activities centred. His spirit was reflected in everything that was done. To him more than to any other belongs the honour of the foremost position to which the Society attained.

There are two other names which deserve to stand high in the Kildare Place roll of honour, John Veevers and Charles Bardin. Particulars of both will be given when we come to deal with the subjects which specially engaged their attention. They are

[1] See p. 52.

mentioned here because, though not members of the governing body, they were the experts upon whose help and counsel the Committee depended. In John Veevers they found an officer with a genius for educational organisation; in Charles Bardin a literateur of rare skill and judgment. To both they were always ready to listen, with the result that J. Veevers systems, and C. Bardin's books were honoured wherever the Society was known.

CHAPTER IV.

RAPID DEVELOPMENT, 1815-1824.

With the passing of the Parliamentary Vote, the history of the Education Society entered on a new phase. Ample means were now at their disposal for carrying out their plans. It is true that they did not at first contemplate the acceptance of more than would give them their Model School. This attitude, however, did not continue. Parliament had made the grant with readiness. The work and aim of the Society had met with warm approval at its hands. It might be that the dangers of becoming the administrators of public money had been exaggerated. It was certain that the acceptance of yearly grants would open up possibilities of valuable work attainable in no other way. The vote for the Model School accordingly became the first of a long series of annual grants, which soon enabled the Society to extend their operations over the whole of Ireland.

No time was lost in making the arrangements

necessary for the larger responsibilities which had now to be faced. The Committee was increased. Before, it had been limited to twenty-one members; the limit was now made thirty-one. In addition to such temporary Sub-Committees as might from time to time be required, four permanent Sub-Committees were entrusted with the various departments of the work.

The Correspondence Committee undertook the varied, complicated, and ever-increasing transactions that arose in connexion with the founding of schools all over Ireland. The following is a list of the principal branches with which they had to deal as the operations of the Society developed:

Information concerning the building and fitting of schools.

The supply of school requisites at cheap rates.

Grants towards the outfit of schools.

Grants towards the building of schools.

Grants towards teachers' salaries.

The Model School and Training Committee:

In modern phraseology this Committee took charge of the Society's Training College and the Practising Schools.

The Book Committee:

The publication of educational works, and of suitable literature for the home, tasked all the energies of the Book Committee.

The Accounts Committee:

The large income which the Society soon found themselves administering, and the fact that most of it came from public sources, made an exact system of accounts, and of office work a necessity. The extracts from S. Bewley's evidence given above,[1] illustrate the care and success with which the Department was managed.

The Inspection Committee:

This and the next Committee, though of later growth, are mentioned here for the sake of completeness. The Inspection Committee had their hands full when the Society's Inspectors were engaged in visiting schools in all parts of Ireland. They planned the tours, reviewed the execution of the work, and tabulated the reports.

The Library Committee:

When grants of 'Libraries,' *i.e.* Sets of the Society's Cheap Books, began, this Committee was formed for the systematic carrying out of their distribution.

All responsible work was undertaken by the various Sub-Committees, and by the General Committee, to which the Sub-Committees reported regularly. The description of the way the members worked, which Mr. Jackson gave in his evidence before the Education Commission, will not readily be paralleled in any similar connexion.

[1] P. 44.

Every Saturday the General Committee met. The permanent Sub-Committees had each a fixed weekly meeting. There was seldom a day in which no meeting was held. Frequently more than one Committee met the same day. The Correspondence Sub-Committee which was Mr. Jackson's own department, met every Wednesday, and frequently continued sitting by adjournment each day till Saturday.

The men who gave thus freely of their time and labour were almost without exception among the busiest of the period. One Master in Chancery, eleven barristers, most of them with large practices, two bank directors, two private bankers, six merchants, two solicitors: such were the members who were able to arrange for daily meetings.

They accomplished their self-imposed task by means of the hour fixed for beginning. At eight in summer, and half-past eight in winter the General Committee met. The proceedings commenced with breakfast, after which they were continued until the business was finished. And all this, be it remembered, was done without pecuniary recompense or allowance; no travelling expenses were accepted; the members paid for their breakfast; they even paid for cups, saucers, cutlery, plate, and linen. A subscription for 'breakfast equipage' was regularly levied. 'Do you receive any remuneration?' was one of the questions Mr. Jackson

was asked, by the Commissioners. 'Not pecuniary' was his reply. 'Do you receive any other?' 'I apprehend we shall receive ample remuneration hereafter, from witnessing the improved state of the country.'

The duty which naturally occupied attention first after the passing of the Parliamentary Vote was the building of the Model School. In the second part of this book full details are given as to how the Committee got their plans and carried them into operation. Here it will suffice to note that the Society aimed at having school buildings second to none in existence, and that they shrank from no steps which seemed likely to help towards the accomplishment of their object.

The negotiations for the Kildare Place site proved to be complicated and difficult. A year elapsed before the building could be commenced. A year more went by before the Society could begin to occupy their own premises. The Depository for the sale of School Requisites was opened in November, 1817, and the same month the Committee were permanently installed in their new Board Room and Offices. The first Annual Meeting in the large school was held in June, 1818. By April, 1819, all was complete, and the schools were in full working order, with an attendance of between seven and eight hundred

pupils, and a full supply of Masters in Training. The total cost of the buildings thus completed was above £14,000.

The enforced delay in the opening of the schools would have been more trying, had it not been for a practical step taken as soon as parliamentary support justified a venture of the kind. Schools, entitled the South Eastern Schools, had been carried on for a few years in the neighbourhood of Kildare Place by an independent Committee. These schools the Education Society took over in 1816. They thus secured an attendance for their Kildare Place Schools when ready, as the South Eastern Schools then ceased to exist ; and what was perhaps even more important, they acquired an experience in school management, which helped them to raise the Kildare Place Schools at once to a position of unrivalled eminence.

In the meantime rapid development had been taking place in every branch of organisation deemed necessary for making the Society what they aimed at being in deed as well as in title, viz., the Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor of Ireland.

What had been accomplished before the acceptance of Parliamentary aid may be tersely described in the modest words of the petition for the grant. After setting out clearly the principles of the Society with reference to non-interference and the reading of Holy Scripture, the petition continues:

'Though the exertions of your Petitioners have been necessarily circumscribed by the disproportion of their funds (which arise wholly from voluntary contributions) to the magnitude of their undertaking, yet they have had the satisfaction to know that they have materially contributed to advance the cause of national education. They have prepared and published "Hints and Directions for erecting and fitting up school-houses," and have compiled and published elementary reading and spelling books, for the use of schools on the improved plan. For these there has been a great and increasing demand from schools in every part of Ireland, and they are sold upon very moderate terms; other necessary works are in preparation for the press, and amongst them a system of arithmetic adapted to the modern improvement in the art of teaching. Your Petitioners also provide other necessary articles for schools, all of which they furnish at very low prices. Above 140 local establishments in all parts of the country were thus supplied during the past year, and it is an encouraging fact that during that period the demand for all these articles has been double that of the preceding year, a fact at once proving the extension of education and the increasing usefulness of the institution.'

The publication of three books, and the hope of publishing others, the sale of improved school requisites to 140 schools during the course of a year, and the belief that interest in education and the use-

fulness of the Society were extending—this outside the training of teachers—was all that was offered as the result of three and a half year's work.

It was much more than appeared at sight. Educational activity had been called into existence to a remarkable extent. The popular imagination had been everywhere stirred by the project of providing good schools for the people.

In support of this position there is abundant documentary evidence. But a simpler proof may be found in the instantaneous development which took place as soon as the required funds became available. Wise plans and firm foundations were there already; the only thing needed for the upgrowth of the structure was some means of meeting the builders' calls.

The second Parliamentary grant which the Society received was in aid of their publishing work. The amount was substantial—£6000. It bore splendid fruit. Those who will take the trouble to read the chapter on the Publications of the Society will find evidence which goes far towards proving that the Society became the first educational publishers of their time. Their books came to be counted by the million; they found their way into all parts of the world; and wherever they went they were acknowledged as the best of their kind.

From 1817 onwards annual Parliamentary grants were voted in aid of the general educational work of

the Society. The first amounted to £9653. They gradually rose, till they reached upwards of £30,000.

Relying on these grants, the Committee pushed forward in all possible directions. Having arranged for the building of their own Model School, and having made comfortable temporary arrangements for the teachers whose training was still being carried on in School Street, they proceeded to work out their plans for the education of the whole country. By means of carefully drafted returns, the educational needs of the different districts were ascertained. Familiar as the members of the Society were in general with the needs of Ireland, the revelations of their returns came to them with something like a shock. Whole tracts were found to be without schools of any kind. The few existing schools were almost entirely of a private nature, such as the hedge schools made familiar to us by Carleton's *Traits and Stories of the Irish Peasantry.*

The Society deliberately set themselves to revolutionise this so eminently undesirable state of affairs. Upon all whom they could reach they urged the importance of having the schools under public management. The formation of district Committees —'Local Associations' they were termed—was strenuously recommended, partly with the object of enlisting the interest and support of the wealthy, partly in order to bring public opinion to bear upon the conduct of the schools.

For the improvement of schools in operation, and for encouraging new foundations, various methods of rendering assistance were systematically devised.

The grants of school requisites either free, or upon reduced terms, which had been made in a limited way from the first, now swelled to very large proportions.

One of the special features of the Society's work was the granting of its publications to form Libraries of instructive and interesting books in connexion with each school. As their publications increased the School Library system was extended, and Libraries, *i.e.* complete sets of the 'Cheap Books,' were granted freely wherever responsible public institutions of any kind signified a willingness to undertake their safe custody. By 1831 upwards of 11,000 of these 'Libraries' had been established.

The first pecuniary assistance which the Society were able to give to schools took the form of grants for repairs and for equipment. The amount of the grant was usually £20. The cash was not remitted until evidence of work completed, or purchases made, was supplied. A single extract from a letter of the time will convey, better than statistics or descriptions, at once the need and the appreciation of these grants. A schoolmaster in Donegal writes in 1818:

> The Drimrat School-house is now in complete order, and I beg you will assure your Committee that I really am at a loss for words to express my gratitude for their liberal grant

of £10 to assist in completing it. I trust my exertions to second their endeavours for the public good will compensate for this defect.

The happy effects of your liberal grants to me have made a great change in the comforts of the children. They formerly had a cold, uncomfortable School-house, with no other seats than stones and grass sods; and their poor winter covering they would fold, and, though wet through, would put it under them: but the scene is quite changed; they now have a well plaistered School-house, with comfortable forms, and rails to hang their old petticoats, aprons, etc. (which serve the poor for mantles) on. But this is not all; they are rescued from ignorance, which is the chief cause of human misery; and the blessings of education, cleanliness, and regularity not only appear in the School, but in the humble dwellings of the poor; and it is to be hoped that the time is fast approaching 'when man will no more say to his neighbour or his brother, know the Lord, for all shall know him, from the least to the greatest.' With ardent wishes for the success of your Committee in so laudable and truly meritorious a work.

I am, Sir,

Most respectfully, etc.,

A. H.

In 1818 assistance of this kind was given to 78 schools. By 1824 the number of schools receiving assistance within the year was upwards of 1100.

As the resources available increased, the Repair and Fitting grants were supplemented by grants for Building. They were given only where there was satisfactory evidence that the localities concerned were

prepared to co-operate liberally. Long leases of the ground and suitable plans were held essential.

In 1824, when the Government subsidy had risen to £22,000, nearly £20,000 was expended in aiding schools in the three ways specified thus far.

Even more far-reaching in its permanent effect than the grants, was the system of gratuities to teachers, which the Society originated. It implied the annual reviewing of the work done in the schools connected with Kildare Place. The essentials of the scheme were trustworthy reports and adequate rewards. For the reports the Committee trusted in part to such opinions as the local managers might give. They relied chiefly upon the ability of their own Inspectors. Under Mr. Veevers, who began the work of inspecting in 1818, and who throughout acted as Chief Inspector, a staff of efficient Inspectors was gradually formed. The first was appointed in 1819; by 1824 there were six. During the year 1824 these six Inspectors visited and reported upon 1277 schools. As the result of these reports, the gratuities for the year amounted to £3861 10s. They ranged from two to ten pounds. The majority were five pounds. When it is remembered that the ordinary income of the teachers in those days was about £15, the influence of a gratuity of even £5 will be understood.

The most cursory glance at the figures already given is enough to establish the remarkable develop-

ment which took place from the date of the first parliamentary grant in 1815, to the close of 1824, at which date the fortunes of the Society entered upon a new stage. But there is still more to be told. By 1819, as mentioned above, all the Dublin work of the Society was concentrated at Kildare Place. Here were the Offices and Committee Room; here was the Depository; here were the Model Schools; here were the Teachers in Training. With the improvement of the schools everywhere, the demand for masters rapidly increased, and the numbers in training rose proportionately. Properly qualified mistresses also became a necessity, and the Society were called on to undertake a female training department. For this purpose an extension of premises was required, and a large adjoining house, No. 2 Kildare Place, was rented. A further extension became inevitable in 1824. The ever-increasing work overflowed in all directions. A second plot of land was obtained, and the Kildare Street, as distinguished from the Kildare Place buildings, were begun. While they were in progress, the needed accommodation was temporarily provided by taking a house in St. Stephen's Green.

The results of the nine years of active development, above described, may now be summarised.

Two entirely new sets of buildings had been erected, and a third was rapidly rising.

The Kildare Place Model Schools were in vigorous

working order, with something like a thousand pupils in regular attendance. These schools represented the most complete embodiment of the educational ideals of the day. In 1815 thirty-two masters had been trained; in 1824 the number was 840, and the training of mistresses had begun.

In 1815 nothing but three educational books had been published. By 1824 all the books required by the demands of the time had been undertaken, and in some subjects, notably geography and needlework, the Society had distanced all competitors. The more prominent of these educational books were being sold in editions of five and ten thousand.[1]

In another line the literary success had been equally great. The 'Cheap Books' sold amounted to 957,457. The market was to a large extent purified from the immoral literature which had been prevalent before. Libraries of healthy books were being established everywhere.

Most noteworthy of all was the way in which Ireland had been covered with good schools. In 1815 there were no schools in connexion with the Society. Commencing with eight in 1816, they rose uninterruptedly year by year till in 1824 they numbered 1490, attended by 'not fewer than one hundred thousand children.' Their distribution was as remarkable as their number. Every county had its share. A table published early in 1824[2] shows

[1] For details see pp. 220-223. [2] *Report* 12, p. 79.

more schools in Galway than in Dublin. Tyrone and Antrim in the north, and Cork in the south, have each more schools than any of the other counties.

This rapid growth of schools was principally due to the wise way in which the grants of the Society helped the local authorities to build, to equip, and to supply with suitable requisites.

The good work which the schools did was stimulated and maintained by their careful system of inspection, coupled with their grants in aid of the teachers' salaries.

Nor was this all; not only had the operations of the Society reached to all parts of Ireland, they had further succeeded in their attempt to revolutionise public opinion as to school management. So completely had the 'private' system retreated, that the necessity at first felt for aiding private schools had disappeared. From 1823 onwards the Society confined their assistance to schools managed in a public way.

If we pause here to enquire what view was taken of the Society's work by the educational authorities of other countries, we shall not be surprised to find that the rapid development of educational activity in Ireland had attracted general attention. Already the reputation of Kildare Place had become European.

The Count de Lasteyrie was perhaps the most

notable educational figure of his time. When the Treaty of Paris gave peace to France, and it became possible to take fresh thought for the needs of the people, a Government Commission on Education was appointed, and the Count, with five others, was invited to aid the ministry. As the result a Model School was established in Paris. It was managed by the 'Society for Elementary Instruction.' The Government gave grants in aid. The Count stands out as the central figure of the movement. He travelled everywhere in order to study schools. His writings include a book on the schools of Germany and Holland, and one upon 'the new system' (Lancaster's) as suited for all 'the four parts' of the world. If there was any living man more competent than another to pronounce upon the relative merits of the schools he saw, it was the Count de Lasteyrie.

After a visit of inspection to Kildare Place he gave it as his opinion that the Central School of the Education Society was the best in existence, and that it formed a model which all the capitals in Europe ought to imitate.

The Count was not alone in his estimate of the rank to which the Kildare Place work had attained. As we have already seen,[1] the British and Foreign Society had from the first taken the most generous interest in the progress of Irish Education. When

[1] See p. 22.

the Duke of Kent died, the Duke of Cambridge, like his brother one of its warmest supporters, took his place as patron of the Education Society, and gave expression to his interest in the form of a handsome donation. The Reports of the English Society recognise in the fullest way the position which Kildare Place had won. No jealousy was felt with reference to the Government grants; on the contrary, they were made the subject of warm congratulation; and when the powerful assistance thus given enabled the Irish work to assume proportions not possible in England, and to take the lead, with reference to books, subjects, and methods, the English friends showed their appreciation of the skill and wisdom with which the Kildare Place affairs had been managed, by electing Mr. Jackson an honorary member of their Society, where his name figured in such distinguished company as that of the Count de Lasteyrie, Pestalozzi, and Fellenberg, *i.e.* as one of the leading educationists of Europe. In keeping with this practical recognition was the way in which the Reports spoke. In the Report for 1822 we read, 'it must be peculiarly gratifying to every friend of his country to learn from reports . . . the rapid strides which education continues to make in that island. . . . This Society has spread blessings over Ireland.' The Report for 1824 says 'the Committee turn to Ireland with feelings of grateful exultation. The Society for Promoting the Educa-

tion of the Poor is advancing with gigantic strides. Supported by the munificence of Parliament, and managed with great zeal and prudence, this Society becomes every year more interesting and important. The success of the past year is most exhilarating.'

Perhaps even more convincing is the Scotch evidence to the same effect. The English estimate of the value of the Kildare Place work was largely founded on what had been read. From Scotland we have the testimony of an eye-witness.

Professor James Pillans, F.R.S.E., was an educational authority much respected and widely known in the early part of last century.[1] He was first Rector of the High School, and afterwards Professsr of Humanity in the University, Edinburgh. Happening to visit the County Antrim in the year 1827, his natural tastes led him into a number of the schools of the Education Society in that district. So great was the impression made upon him, that he returned the following year with the express purpose of seeing the schools. In carrying out his plans he devoted a considerable time to the inspection of the methods as he saw them in operation. He visited many districts, and a large number of schools, including the Model Schools in Dublin. Inspector Griffiths, who discovered him in a school in County Down, has placed on record the deep admiration stirred in Professor

[1] In recognition of his services to education he was elected a Member of the French Society for Elementary Education.

Pillans by what he saw. 'Your schools,' he said, 'are a hundred years before those in Scotland.' As he has himself told us,[1] the discovery was one peculiarly ungrateful to his feelings as a Scotchman. But he had the good sense and the courage to make known what he had seen. In spite of the temporary irritation which he foresaw as inevitable, he did not hesitate to lecture publicly on the excellence of the schools which the Education Society had planted in the four provinces of Ireland. Conscious that the old Parochial Schools had been outstripped in the struggle for proficiency, he used the schools of Ireland as a stimulus and an example to bring about Scotch educational reform.[2]

[1] *Principles of Elementary Teaching chiefly in reference to the Parochial Schools of Scotland*, p. 75. Edinburgh: Adam Black, and Longmans, London, 1828.

[2] *Op. cit. passim.*

CHAPTER V.

OPPOSITION AND HOSTILITY.

We now turn to a widely different aspect of the Society's history. Thus far we have seen their work receiving approval from all sections of the public, and prospering under the liberal patronage of Parliament. From small beginnings we have watched the building up of a great system which already influences every part of Ireland.

The special difficulties under which the work was carried forward must now engage our attention. From the first there had been those who doubted whether the deliberately chosen constitution would commend itself sufficiently to ensure success. For some years, however, little or no active hostility appeared, and it was not till 1819 that the opposition became pronounced. It then took definite shape, and continued growing in intensity, until, at the time reached by the last chapter—the year 1824—it had attained proportions which threatened the very existence of the Society.

In most of the accounts of the Kildare Place work which have been published in modern times, the contrast between the initial calm and the final storm is noted. Praise is awarded for liberality at the outset; blame, more or less accentuated, is meted out for illiberality at the close. It is assumed that a change of policy took place, and that the attacks were the result of the hostility thus provoked.[1] For this assumption no evidence is produced. None exists. All makes the other way. The published reports, the official minutes, the confidential letters, all unite in bearing testimony to the unswerving firmness with which the original constitution and principles were maintained.

To arrive at the true explanation we must examine the fundamental principles of the Society, side by side with the movements of the time, and see to what extent they adapt themselves to one another.

As we have seen,[2] the leading principle which from the first governed the Society was to afford the same advantages for education to all classes of professing Christians, without interfering with the peculiar religious opinions of any.[3] In pursuance of this object they promoted the foundation of schools where the appointment of governors, teachers,

[1] *Ireland from* 1728 *to* 1898, ch. iv. pp. 109-110. *Fifty years of Concession to Ireland*, pp. 121-122. *Two centuries of Irish History*, pt. iii. ch. iii. p. 294.

[2] See above p. 2.

[3] *First Report*, p. 4.

and scholars was uninfluenced by sectarian distinction, where the *Scriptures without Note or Comment* were read, and where no distinctive catechisms, or books of religious controversy were permitted. This constitution was adopted not as ideal, but as the best which circumstances allowed. To those who complained of the exclusion of distinctive teaching, the Committee urged the impossibility of making *particular* religious instruction a part of the business of *National* education in Ireland;[1] in confirmation of which view they quoted the authoritative opinion to the same effect of the Board of Education.[2] To those who objected to the compulsory reading of Holy Scripture they quoted the success of the School Street Schools, where for some twenty years the custom had been observed with general approval.[3] The welcome which greeted this clear announcement of policy not unnaturally confirmed the hopes of its promoters, and made them sanguine as to ultimate success. There were, of course, a few who criticised, and some notes of discord made themselves heard; but nearly eight years went by before opposition became real. The Society were already possessing the land when serious attacks commenced.

The explanation of a phenomenon so remarkable to modern eyes is to be found in the condition of the country from 1811 to 1819. During much of the period, poverty, famine, and disease sapped

[1] *Third Report*, p. 18. [2] *Fourteenth Report.* [3] See above, pp. 8-9.

the vitals of the people. Nor was there any counter-irritant to arouse them from their torpor. The leaders of the 'Catholic' party were at variance with each other, divided, apparently hopelessly, on the subject of the veto. Grattan still continued to move resolutions in Parliament in favour of Catholic Emancipation; but his adherence to the veto deprived him of anything like national support. As yet, the priests, so soon to come forward and claim leadership, remained in ignorance of their power. All hope of any change for the better, as the result of their own exertions, seemed to have deserted the Roman Catholics. The historian of the period thus describes what he calls their disgraceful state of lethargy. 'Everyone seemed to have returned to a state of inertia, from which there existed little hope of arousing them in the future . . . the country seemed once more consigned to irredeemable apathy. . . . The Catholic spirit had totally passed away; the dead body only was left behind.'[1]

It is not difficult to understand the readiness with which the Education Society were welcomed in such a time as this. Coming with the offer of learning in their hands, undertaking to respect all religious differences, exhibiting the unusual spectacle of a body in which members of the different religions were working cordially side by side for the common

[1] Wyse, vol. i. pp. 188-191.

good, the Society were hailed on all sides with approval, and their efforts met everywhere with ready support.

It is quite possible that, had no system more in accordance with Roman Catholic desires been attainable, the Kildare Place Society might have ultimately prevailed. If their principles were resisted by some Roman Catholics they were embraced by others. The Committee had solid ground for optimism, when, for instance, such a prelate as the Most Rev. Dr. Everard, Archbishop of Cashel, after a minute and careful enquiry into the principles of the Society, gave them his sanction, and introduced them into his diocese.[1]

The first sure signs of coming trouble are to be found in the annual meeting of 1819, when O'Connell attended as a member of the Society, and criticised their policy. It is worth noting that one of the few expressions of settled opposition which had been received before this date had come from O'Connell's county. Bishop Sughrue wrote, 'in the south of Ireland, if you except the large towns, 99 out of 100 children that would frequent such schools are R. Catholics. Why not give these teachers, catechisms, etc., of the selection of their pastors, and give the Protestants teachers of their own communion; this, in my humble opinion, is the plan of education suited to the wants and circumstances of

[1] *Minutes, Bk. B., Feb.* 14, 1818.

Ireland, and I must respectfully decline co-operating with any other system.'[1]

At this time O'Connell was moving steadily to the commanding position he afterwards occupied. His resistance to the proposition that the Crown should have the right of veto, with reference to the appointment of Roman Catholic bishops, had marked him out as the leader of the rising popular party. His political genius told him that if he could but rouse the priests and enrol them on his side success would be certain. 'To make the priests the rulers of the country and himself the ruler of the priests was his first great object.'[2] The task was not an easy one. Hitherto the priesthood had consistently shunned politics and publicity. If O'Connell was to succeed in altering this attitude some impending peril of an especially stimulating nature must be discovered. In the Education Society he found the required objective. However ready the priests might appear to accept for their flocks the liberal system which the Society offered, they did so only because nothing more consonant with their wishes seemed within reach. The education which they really desired was one which would be completely under their control. Understanding this, and perceiving that the path to alliance with the priesthood lay through the school, O'Connell adopted the bold

[1] Letter dated Killarney, May 2, 1817.

[2] Lecky, *Leaders of Public Opinion in Ireland*, vol. ii. p. 19.

policy of attacking the Education Society, strong though it was in parliamentary support. In so doing he took a step whose consequences are with us still. For good or ill the priest stands now in the forefront of politics. It was O'Connell who brought him there.

The attack which O'Connell made in 1819 won influential sympathy from two noblemen whose liberal views and prominent position made them important allies. Both the Duke of Leinster and Lord Cloncurry had extended their patronage to the Education Society, and had subscribed to its principles. But when O'Connell showed that the fundamental regulation with reference to the reading of Holy Scripture was likely to prevent the general acceptance of the Society's Schools by the Roman Catholics, they became anxious to obtain a modification of the rule.

With this object they obtained an interview with the Committee in April, 1819, and as the result were invited to frame new rules themselves, provided the principles on which the Society was founded remained inviolate. This they were unable to do, a result easily foreseen; for of their own motion the Committee had already made every conceivable concession. When religious distinctions did not affect patronage, teaching, attendance; when no doctrinal instruction was allowed; when the portion of Scripture to be read, and the versions to be used,[1] were

[1] For Versions approved by Society see p. 140.

left absolutely to the discretion of the managers of the school, it was manifest that no further concession short of the total removal of the Bible was possible. The position thus reached was simple and unmistakable ; it amounted to a conflict for the omission or the exclusion of the Bible from the school. This was the point upon which O'Connell joined issue. In making the rule as to the Bible the object of his attack the leader chose his ground well. To succeed was to transform the Society and to reshape it in accordance with the requirements of the Roman Catholics. To fail was to unite the priests in solid and determined opposition.

The annual meeting of 1820 proved eventful. It was held by the Society in their new Model School on the 24th of February, having been postponed from February 2nd on account of the death of George III. Both sides approached the occasion as a test of strength. O'Connell, supported by the Duke of Leinster, the Earl of Fingal, Lord Cloncurry, and a number of new members, whose guineas had given them voting rights, moved for a committee of seven, to enquire if the rules were fairly adapted to carrying out the professed policy of non-interference. The Committee stood on guard with an amendment to the effect that it was not competent for a meeting of subscribers to alter the fundamental principle with reference to the reading of the Scriptures ; and they entrenched themselves against future

attacks by providing that no change which one general meeting might make in the laws should be valid until confirmed by another.

The case, both against and for the Society, was stated with so much force and fulness at the meeting, and this by the prominent representatives of both sides, that we shall find no better means of understanding the controversy than a brief study of the principal speeches. For their preservation we are indebted to the Education Society. Strong proof, both of the integrity of the Society and of their implicit belief in their policy, is to be found in the fact that they considered that the best way to minimise O'Connell's attack was to publish a full account of the proceedings.[1]

O'Connell began by asserting that the principle of educating without interference with religion was 'a noble principle for Ireland, a blessed principle'; but, as he held that the practice of the Society was inconsistent with the principle, he moved for a Committee of enquiry. The difficulty felt by him and others had been caused by the rule which required that the Scriptures without note or comment should be read. This rule had rendered the means employed by the Society inefficient, and the principles of non-interference nugatory. In proof of this a number of cases were quoted, in which Roman Catholics had refused aid from the Society rather than

[1] *Dublin*: Printed and sold by Christopher Bentham, 1820.

comply with the rule; appeal was then made to a recent Bull of the Pope's, which 'excluded from Catholic Schools the Testament even with note and comment, even though these might be acceptable to the Catholics'; and then, as though to end the matter, O'Connell produced a resolution passed at a meeting of the parish priests of Dublin, at the invitation of their Archbishop, the Most Reverend Dr. Troy, to the effect that 'the Scriptures with or without note or comment, are not fit to be used as a school book.' This O'Connell significantly added had been done at his instance, in order that the resolution might be read at that meeting.

Up to this point the tone of the speech had been studiously moderate. The conclusion assumed a stronger tone. The position of the Roman Catholics with reference to the Bible and tradition was defended. The superior claims for consideration which the number and poverty of the Roman Catholics gave them were urged. The injurious consequences, for which the proselytising efforts of certain societies might be held responsible, were paraded. No direct charge of proselytism was brought against the Education Society; but it was suggested that their rule as to the Bible laid them open to suspicion. Finally the demand for inquiry was pressed home with bitterness, but without any expectation that it could be granted.

After a short speech from Lord Cloncurry in

support of O'Connell's resolution, the case for the Society was stated at length by one of its original members, Mr. Richard B. Warren.

They had been urged, he said, to forego their rule with reference to Holy Scripture, and to give education without any religious instruction. How such a course could be reconciled with the conscience of a Christian, he was unable to understand. To those who objected to their practice, and affirmed that the reading of the Scriptures made their Society useless to Roman Catholics he replied by pointing to facts. While admitting that progress would be retarded by such dissatisfaction as some of the Priests had expressed, he was firm in his conviction that the Society, if they abode firmly by their principles, must ultimately succeed. A year ago Lord Cloncurry and Mr. O'Connell had prophesied failure unless the rule as to the Bible was changed. What had resulted? The number of schools received during the past year very nearly equalled the total number of all previously admitted. Of those which they had declined, not more than one a year, on an average, had objected to the reading of the Scriptures. Facts such as these ought 'to convince any candid mind that the system adopted by the Society was well suited to the circumstance of the country.' Those who had criticised seemed to think that the Roman Catholic Clergy were the only persons whose opinions on education were of much conse-

quence. It was true that the great body of those to be educated were Roman Catholics. But it was equally true that the great majority of those who were able and willing to devote their time and their property to promoting the education of the poor were of a different persuasion. Very few were the Protestants who would lend their assistance to schools from which the Sacred Scriptures were excluded. Were this rule altered in the direction suggested, almost all who had subscribed to the Society before the present year would remove their names from its books. The excellence of the system which had been adopted had enabled him to reply to the arguments of the critics; he submitted, however, that it was not a case for argument. The Society were solemnly pledged to their fundamental rule. From the public, from other societies, and from parliament, they had accepted aid for schools where the Scriptures must be read. He maintained that no meeting of Subscribers had power to interfere with so radical a part of their constitution.

Mr. Warren concluded by moving an amendment to the effect that it was not competent for the meeting to alter the fundamental principle. This amendment was seconded by Mr. Jackson, who observed that they had never expected to please everyone. Some blamed them for teaching the Bible at all; others complained that their Bible teaching was insuf-

ficient. For these criticisms they were prepared. Their hope was that the great majority of the public would approve of the moderation of the system adopted, and of the impartiality with which it was worked.

After one or two more speeches the amendment was put, and carried by a majority of four to one; whereupon O'Connell forthwith announced the severance of his connexion with the Society, by declaring that he and his friends would be no longer members.

The sword was now drawn in earnest, and O'Connell lost no time in following up his carefully prepared plans. The motion for an inquiry was in fact little more than a feint. The real policy, whereby the priesthood were to be united in an educational campaign, was declared in the following letter, which he sent to the *Dublin Weekly Register* the day after the Kildare Place meeting:

To the Most Reverend and Right Rev.
The Catholic Prelates of Ireland.

MERRION SQUARE, 25th Feb., 1820.

MY LORDS,

The Society which has called itself "an Education Society," and has received so much of the public money, held its long-postponed meeting yesterday. At that meeting I have endeavoured to do the duty which I owed to my religion and my country, a duty which I undertook by the authority of some of your Lordships, and with the sanction

of others, and which I humbly hope I shall have performed with the approbation of all.

This "Education Society" did, as your Lordships are aware, *profess* to afford equal facilities to all sects and persuasions. Indeed, it went further, for it ostentatiously proclaimed as its LEADING PRINCIPLE equal facilities to persons of all religions. You, my Lords, have long been aware that its practices directly contradicted its principle, and that the avowal of such a principle was a mere pretence, which might have deluded many, and did delude some, of the members of the Society itself. But all delusion is now at an end. The pretences of Education and Liberality must be *now* abandoned, and the practice of exclusion of Catholics, and the purpose of proselytism are *now* either avowed in candour, or they stand proved by unerring evidence.

I need not detail to your Lordships the proofs which sustain my assertion. The conduct of the Society yesterday has placed the matter beyond a doubt. I think every honest, enlightened, and liberal Protestant in the empire will hear with disgust this fact—that at this *Society for Educating the Poor*—God bless the mark—that at this *leading* paragon of liberality and benevolence, I was rudely and violently hissed *merely for a necessary and unpresuming assertion of Catholic principles*.[1] This indecent and unchristian reception was

[1] The following is the passage in the speech which elicited the hisses :

'As the only thing that is objected to is the circulation of the Holy Scriptures, I will tell you the course you ought to pursue as honest men : You ought to come forward to new model your resolution, and also to give aid to such as refuse to use the Scriptures without note or comment. I well know that I shall hear to-day, as I did last year, something like prose run mad, something like

bestowed upon the simple detail of those principles, which regulate the doctrines of the ancient faith of Ireland, and of the Christian world, touching the dissemination of the Holy Scriptures. Oh, what a model-school of decency and charity this Kildare-street Association is!! And, judge you, my Lords, how safe the poor and unprotected Irish peasant boy must be in the hands of these hissing educators, when I, who both despise and defy their bigotry, could not escape the demonstrations of its virulent spirit.

It is true, my Lords, that such indecent and unchristian conduct may be said to be the act of only a few of the Society, or of its partisans. For the sake of argument—if it be any use in argument—let it be admitted to have been so. Certainly many are free from the reproach. Yet what can be said of the majority of the Society, who rejected my

half sermons about the value and the origin of this book, the Bible. (Applause, mixed with louder hisses.) If I have trod on the tail of the serpent of bigotry, let it hiss. Oh, it was a good hiss! a noble hiss! an excellent hiss! and I thank you for the hiss. Those who hissed may suppose they are acting for the service of God, but they serve God by a falsehood. But there is more honesty in the hiss than in those gentlemen who assert one thing and then say and do another. I have stated to you my own opinion, and shall re-state it, notwithstanding the peril of the hiss. The Bible never can be received without note or comment by the Catholic persuasion. Gentlemen hissers, we believe that the entire word of God has not been preserved in writing: we believe that a portion has been preserved in the church which preserved that writing: and this being our tenet, you cannot expect to have the Catholic clergy submit, when their attention is roused, to have the Bible used without note or comment, because they must have *tradition*, which we also call the word of God. Every Catholic is bound in life and in death to assert this—you assert the opposite in your resolution.'

reasonable motion? All I asked was the appointment of a Committee to inquire and report '*Whether the means hitherto adopted by the Society were calculated to carry into effect in a fair and candid manner its avowed leading principle.*'

That, my Lords, was all I asked. I did not ask them to alter their rules without full investigation, and now mark their candour. They, by a triumphant majority, refused all inquiry, and whether their means be fair and candid or not, they have resolved to persevere in that practice which I shewed so decidedly to contradict their own principle.

This conduct could not escape censure. Indeed, it met with immediate and deserved punishment. His Grace the Duke of Leinster, the Patron of the Society, or its President, declared his determination to quit the Society. They have lost the first in worth, as the first in rank of the Irish. The good Earl of Fingal, too, added the weight of his disapprobation, and has also abandoned them. I am proud to say that Lord Cloncurry did the same; and now they may console themselves, as well as they can, over, I trust, the expiring embers of proselytism.

Yet surely no man can wonder that this Society should evince indifference or worse feelings towards the Catholics of Ireland. It includes amongst its members some of the bitterest enemies of Catholic rights and of religious liberty. Or, how should these men be able to educate others, who themselves are destitute of the first and most essential part of education—Christian charity.

Having thus, my Lords, contributed to strip this association of its pretences, and left it to enjoy all the advantages of its future classification amidst the branches of the Bible Society, allow me most respectfully to solicit the attention of your Lordships to the necessity of counteracting the mischiefs that might flow from torpor or remissness on this subject.

We shall, my Lords, be calumniated, we shall be charged with discountenancing education, and, above all, religious education. Let us meet our calumniators with the best possible refutation.

For this purpose, I, with becoming deference, submit the propriety of immediately forming a National Association for Education—an Association which shall honestly practise what others merely profess, namely, the education of all classes of Christians, conjointly and without interference with their religious tenets. They can, and ought to be, educated together in literature and benevolence—Learning and Charity can go together—and as to religion, let each child be separately and apart instructed in the religious tenets of its parents by persons of its own religion.

Such is the plan which my venerable friend, the Right Rev. Dr. Archdeacon has lately recommended. Such is the plan which every honest and liberal man of every sect and persuasion will patronize and support. I think it is indeed probable that of such a Society his Grace the Duke of Leinster will be easily persuaded to become the Patron. Let the rich subscribe their pounds, and the poor will cheerfully pour in their pence. Parliament itself will, in its wisdom, either transfer the annual donation from those who only profess, to those who openly and honestly practise the true principle of Christian education ; or, at least, it will be likely to share that donation between the two. At all events, the experiment is worth making ; it is worth shewing to the empire that there are men in Ireland—that the Catholic Prelates are amongst the foremost of them—who sincerely wish to promote mutual charity and educated benevolence, and desire to extirpate for ever those religious animosities which have hitherto distracted and divided our country, and plunged her in misery, degradation, and ruin.

I have the honour to be, with sentiments of profound veneration and respect, my Lords, your Lordships' most obedient and most faithful humble Servant,

DANIEL O'CONNELL.

In reply to this and similar attacks, a letter, signed 'Veritas,' appeared in *The Correspondent.* After a concise sketch of the origin and history of the Education Society, the letter proceeded :

The object of the Society is to diffuse a *well-ordered system of education among the poor, suited to their respective stations in life;* promoting good morals, and industrious and regular habits ; and, as religious principle alone can ensure these most desirable advantages, the Society prescribes that the Holy Scriptures be read, not indiscriminately, not as an initiatory book, but by those only who have attained a suitable proficiency in reading ; nor does it require the entire of the sacred volume to be read, but leaves it to the discretion of the teachers to select such parts as may seem most suited to the capacities of the children ; neither does it permit it to be read as a mere schoolbook, or to be treated lightly or irreverently, as a production of human learning ; but, as the Society is pledged 'to afford the same facilities for education to every denomination of Christians, without interfering with the peculiar religious opinions of any,' it prohibits strictly in its schools all note or comment, written or oral, upon the Scriptures ; it excludes all Catechisms or books of religious controversy ; it admits of no exclusive distinction as to religion in the appointment of masters or managers ; it throws open its gates to the poor of all religions, teaching only those great principles set forth in that Holy Book, to which all Christians, of whatever denomination, give their assent. It gives abundant opportunity to the

children to attend their several places of religious worship ; and to the pastors of each church to inculcate their peculiar forms of faith and of worship on Sundays and out of school hours. Anxious to dissipate every cloud of suspicion, to remove every shadow of objection, when not at the expense of a sacrifice of principle, it has provided Testaments, from whence all marginal notes, and headings of chapters, as well as the preface objected to by the Roman Catholics, have been removed ; and, as the Douay Testament is now published without note or comment, any school in which that version is used is now considered as within the regulations of the Society on this point. Thus, it appears that the Society has conceded all that was possible to concede, and on these principles has it faithfully acted since the year 1811, when they were deliberately and solemnly adopted as its fundamental regulations. Under these banners the Roman Catholic, the Churchman, the Presbyterian, and the Dissenter have joined their ranks, and enlisted in the patriotic cause ; and the Legislature has granted its liberal aid, upon the solemn pledge that the education of the poor of Ireland should be conducted upon this comprehensive system, free and open to all, so far as the maintenance of those principles, which alone render education of any value to the community, would permit.

After the experience of eight years, during which the system adopted by the Society has received the approbation of the liberal of all parties—of Protestants and Roman Catholic laymen, of prelates and inferior clergy, of the Roman Catholic as well as of the Established Church—they are now called upon to alter their fundamental principle, and to exclude the Scriptures from their schools ; they are urged to give up the only means in their power of implanting religious principles in the minds of the poor, and to content

themselves with the mere mechanical improvements of reading and writing. But here the Society pauses, and on this point they must ever resist innovation; once yielded, they must feel that all hopes of establishing a 'well-ordered system of education in Ireland' would be at an end. They must feel that an education without religious principles would be a curse rather than a blessing to their country; they must feel that, the Scriptures once given up, that common tie is lost between Protestant and Catholic, which, teaching both that they are Christians, without calling upon either to renounce their respective modes of faith, unites them in harmony and brotherly love; and they will greatly apprehend that, once losing sight of this bright and pure light, by which they have hitherto shaped their course, the instruction of the lower classes of our common country would cease to be comprehensive, that it would soon become exclusive, that it would lead to evil rather than to good, and would be the means of perpetuating dissension, instead of promoting harmony and union, amongst the poor of this country.

Such are the reasons which impel the Society to resist all innovation upon their leading principle. If impediments have been thrown in the way of the Roman Catholic poor, they are not attributable to the Society. If the gate of instruction be suddenly closed, it will not have been by their hand.

They have been called illiberal, and allusions have unnecessarily been made to political questions, although their Committee carefully avoid any mention of those subjects. They have been held up as partial and exclusive in their conduct, although the order of exclusion has been issued, not from them, but from another quarter. They have been contemptuously designated BIBLE-MEN, as if the desire to promote the knowledge of Divine Truth were a

crime ; and they have lastly been stigmatized as bigots, and arraigned as proselytisers. The charge of bigotry I would dismiss without reply, summoning in their defence their character as individuals, their actions as a Society ; the imputation of proselytism I would repel with firmness, and would call on those who make the charge to substantiate it by proof. Is it evinced by the selection of a Roman Catholic as Master of the Model School in Dublin ? or by the fact that eighty-one Roman Catholic Masters have been educated in that school, without the slightest interference with their religion ? or by the Society's refusing aid to any school in which the rule be that the Masters must be exclusively Protestant, although in other respects the School be conformable to the regulations of the Society ? or by declining to assist any School in which oral comments are made on the Scriptures, though under the most solemn assurances that such comments shall not interfere with peculiar religious opinions ? or by providing the Scriptures, divested of the Preface and of the headings of Chapters in the Authorised Version, which were considered by some as comments ? or by their admitting the Douay Testament, without note or comment, to be used in their Schools, on a par with the Authorised Version ? or by their anxiously calling upon the Roman Catholic Clergy to become superintending Members of the Country Schools, and desiring all visitors to the Schools immediately to inform them, if any attempt is made, directly or indirectly, to interfere with the peculiar religious opinions of the Scholars ? or, lastly, by their having circulated from 200,000 to 300,000 volumes, in no one of which is to be found a single sentence of a proselytising tendency ? If on these grounds only, the imputation of a proselytising spirit in this Society be founded, I must again demand that the charge be substantiated. I call for a single instance in which any attempt has been

made, under the sanction, or with the knowledge of the Society, to interfere with the religious profession of any individual child in the School. I call for a single passage of a proselytising tendency in any one of the publications of the Society ; and I would ask, whether to direct that the Scriptures, without note or comment, be read, can fairly be denominated an attempt at proselytism. Would not this be, in other words, to say that *the Bible, of whatever version, without note or comment, is a proselytising book*, and that the untutored scholar, from the mere perusal of the sacred text, would be led to abandon his Church, in despite of the labours of his spiritual Instructors, and in contradiction to all his early impressions, and all his social ties ? Surely the most strenuous opposer of the Society will not hazard such an opinion.—I am, Sir, your obedient Servant,

VERITAS.

The immediate result of O'Connell's appeal was the formation of the 'Irish National Education Society,' to be followed by the 'Catholic Association' in 1823, the 'New Catholic Association' in 1825, and by Emancipation in 1829.

Among the causes which promoted Emancipation, the historian of the movement gives prominence to the agitation against the Kildare Place Schools.[1] While his account of the motives which influenced the Society is of importance only as showing how the heated political atmosphere obscured the facts, his description of the warfare between the rival systems of education, and his account of its effect upon the

[1] Wyse, vol. i. ch. viii. pp. 232 236.

priests form a valuable though unintended tribute to the genius of O'Connell. If Wyse knew of the steps which O'Connell had taken to kindle and fan the flames, he makes no allusion to them. With him 1823 and the Catholic Association were the beginning of the final struggle. He writes—and here all modern authors follow him—as if there had been no events of importance, no attempts at organisation in the years immediately preceding. He speaks of the successes of 1823 almost as if they were fortuitous. As a matter of fact, the fuel was laid at the Kildare Place meetings of 1819 and 1820; it was kindled when the Roman Catholic Education Society took shape in 1820, with the result that all was ready for the great conflagration which began in 1823.

The policy of the 'Irish National Education Society' may be summed up as consisting in hostility to Kildare Place. It found expression along two channels, one, attacks upon the Kildare Place Schools, the other, attempts to obtain from Parliament a large share if not the whole of the Education grant. The following contemporaneous description will give a general idea of the way in which the attack upon the schools was conducted: 'A person coming at that moment into the country would have been alternately grieved and amused by the tragi-comic conflict. A flock was dragged one way and then dragged another, into this fold and then into that: education was set up against education, school against

school, teacher against teacher; and the whole intellect of the country was made the prize for contending hosts. The war raged long and loudly, and in some places the spiritual brought the fleshly arm to its aid. Teachers were sometimes burnt out of their schools by nightly marauders; flourishing Kildare Place colonies were in a moment annihilated by a single anathema from the Popish altar; every man took part in the insurrection; children were withdrawn from the hostile establishments, and were forced by their parents to give up their reading and writing rather than run the risk of reading or writing "in the wrong way." '[1]

If there were anything to be gained by enlarging upon such details it would not be difficult to supply particular illustrations of the above general description. The Kildare Place documents abound with allusions to the struggle in its various phases. There are numbers of picturesque letters 'from the front' which serve to recall the sufferings to which those who remained faithful to the Education Society were exposed. The bishops and the priests had declared war against the schools; nothing was left undone which tended towards the promotion of a general revolt.

The other end towards which the Roman Catholics directed their efforts was the attainment of financial aid from Parliament. The success of their attacks

[1] Wyse, vol. i. ch. viii. p. 234.

upon the Kildare Place Schools ensured them a hearing. Influential members such as Sir J. Newport and Mr. Spring Rice were found ready to champion their views in the Commons. The Duke of Leinster became a force upon the same side in the Lords. Even strong friends of the Kildare Place system, such as Mr. Peel and Mr. Goulburn, began to doubt as to the possibility of maintaining its position. At last, early in 1824, matters came to a head. A petition from the Roman Catholic bishops was presented, in which they prayed the House 'to adopt such measures as might promote the education of the Roman Catholic poor of Ireland in the most effectual manner.' They complained that the money granted for education was of little or no use to the majority of the people owing to the rule which made the reading of the Bible compulsory; and they stated that 'schools whereof the master professed a religion different from that of his pupils, or from which such religious instruction as the Catholic Church prescribed for youth was excluded . . . could not be resorted to by the children of Roman Catholics.'

The immediate result of this petition was the appointment of a Royal Commission, armed with full power to inquire into and report upon the whole subject of the education of the poor in Ireland.

It is now time to ask, what was the effect produced upon the Education Society by the menaces of its

opponents and the coldness of its friends. If we expect to find anything of the nature of panic, or even of hesitation, we shall have much mistaken alike the enthusiasm and the firmness of these pioneers in primary education. As a matter of fact opposition only served to quicken their energy, and to strengthen their determination. If their attention was called to school after school emptied of its pupils, they were able to point to the ever increasing number of schools and pupils that continued coming under their system. More—they were able to show in case after case, that where schools had been temporarily emptied by the denunciations of the Priests, they were before long refilled by the educational aspirations of the people. If it was hinted that the rooted hostility of the Roman Catholic Bishops must in the end prove fatal to their existence, they were able to show that even among the Roman Catholic Clergy they continued to have supporters. In the appendix to the First Report of the Commissioners are published letters from fifty-nine Roman Catholic Clergymen conveying, in strong terms, their approbation of the principles of the Society, and their gratitude for for the aid they had received.[1] All but one or two of these letters were written subsequently to O'Connell's attack. The majority came when the opposition was at its height. From other quarters

[1] Appendix, 562.

communications of all kinds came urging the Society to persevere in their principles, assuring them of final success. It was of course inevitable that many and diverse charges should be thrust forward in the heat of a contest so vigorous and prolonged. These for the most part were ignored; the Committee believed that they would disappear naturally as the Kildare Place system became better known and better understood. When, however, the attacks were of so prominent and so public a nature as to demand attention there was no hesitation about dealing with them. Speeches at subsequent Annual Meetings were met, as in 1819 and 1820, by temperate but forcible replies. Influential criticisms, as when Lord Cloncurry wrote to the papers, or the Duke of Leinster turned upon them in the House of Lords, were answered with cogency and moderation, and both criticisms and replies were published side by side. When at last the appointment of the Commission of Inquiry was announced, the Committee, so far from being dismayed, received the news with satisfaction. To their mind investigation was synonymous with justification. In the opposition camp the announcement was the signal for the discharge of a series of particularly violent accusations, which did not shrink from imputing not only proselytism, but even dishonesty and deceit.

To all the Committee were content to reply—Prove your charges before the Commission.

CHAPTER VI.

LAST SUCCESSES.

The appointment of the Commission of Irish Education Inquiry in 1824 marked the turning point in the history of the Education Society. Mr. Jackson, at the annual meeting held in 1833, shortly after the withdrawal of the Government grants, spoke sadly of it as a 'disastrous appointment.' It was a true description so far as Kildare Place was concerned. Not that the recommendations of the Commissioners proved, or would have been likely to prove, a satisfactory solution of the difficulties connected with Irish education. Their force lay in another direction; they endorsed the reasonableness of the hostility to the system of the Society, and in so doing prepared the way for its overthrow.

The Commissioners were five in number. Mr. Frankland Lewis was chairman. One of the others, Mr. Leslie Forster, had been a member of the Committee of the Education Society. The original Commission was for two years. It was extended for

a year more, in order to afford opportunity for carrying into practice, by way of experiment, the recommendations of its first Report. As often happens, theories which read well on paper broke down when brought to the test of practice. It was not given to the Commissioners to originate a working system. What they did was to amass materials which others afterwards were able to use. The cost of the Commission was £40,000. The amount was considered large, but no one hinted that it was excessive, in view of the zeal shown and the amount of work done. Nine Reports in all were published. Of these, only the first with its appendix need concern us here. Of the others, Nos. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7 deal with branches of the inquiry foreign for the most part to Kildare Place. No. 9 records the failure of the attempt to work the plan set out in No. 1, and gives some final recommendations. From these recommendations, two out of the five Commissioners dissented.

Upon the fortunes of the Education Society the labours of the Commission had no immediate effect. While their system was criticised, their work met with marked approval. The abortive attempt made to inaugurate schools upon the principle proposed by the Commissioners served to emphasise the difficulties which beset the subject. Government was naturally slow to interfere with what was good, until assured that they had something better to put

into its place. Thus it happened that for seven years more the Society continued to prosper with the help of the annual grants from Parliament.

Before proceeding to deal with these years, it will be right to gather together the opinions expressed by the Commissioners with reference to what had been accomplished. Their criticisms will fall into place more naturally a little later. The Report takes up each subject separately. We shall follow its method and observe its order.

The growth of the country schools is first noted and endorsed. From 'none' in 1816, they have increased until, in 1825, they are 1490. The work done in the schools is such as to merit the following high praise :—

'In the course of our several tours of inspection, we have been in many of the schools connected with the Society, and we found them, generally speaking, convenient, cleanly, and in good order, and, in the instruction given in them, extremely efficient.'

The Model Schools[1] at Kildare Place receive, as was to be expected, considering what we know of them from other sources, unstinted approval. The eclectic principle upon which their system had been evolved is commended. Attention is drawn to the special excellence of their arithmetic and their needlework.

[1] The plural 'Model Schools' gradually replaced the singular 'Model School.'

Their 'order, dispatch, cleanliness, and accuracy,' are spoken of as having 'attained a high degree of perfection.' The estimation in which the schools are held in Dublin is illustrated, and contrasted with the status of other schools, by a description of the anxiety shown by all to obtain apprentices, who have had the advantage of their education. It is noted that other institutions, even with the help of apprentice fees, find difficulty in placing their pupils; while at Kildare Place it is impossible to meet the demand, which is as unfailing as it is spontaneous.

The training of teachers, in the opinion of the Commissioners, is so 'extremely well managed' that they propose leaving the Society undisturbed in this part of their work. The Report praises alike the economy with which the establishment is conducted, and the 'superiority' of its results.

A similar tribute is paid to the publishing department. 'The selection and arrangement of the books have been extremely well conducted, and we have no doubt that the various works which they have prepared are as well calculated as any can be for schools of general instruction, from which everything is to be excluded which can offend the religious tenets of any persuasion of Christians. We think, therefore, that the arrangement and circulation of such books for the use of schools, and the sale and distribution and grants of school requisites may still remain with the Society.'

The payment of annual gratuities to masters and mistresses, and the regulation of their amounts in accordance with the quality of the work done in the schools has, in the opinion of the Commissioners, produced particularly good results. They point with satisfaction to the definite effect produced by the award of even small sums where it is recognised that the grants will be made or withheld, increased or decreased, solely in proportion to merit.

Thus every department of the work done at Kildare Place issues from the ordeal of inquiry with the imprimatur of official commendation—a commendation the more valuable, because it comes from Commissioners who were unable to give their approval to the principles which regulated the Society's constitution.

It was the same with the Committee; they themselves were praised; the attacks made upon their integrity were scouted. The Report speaks with admiration of the unquestioned zeal and the untiring energy of the members of the different Committees. Attention is called to the way in which the representation of the different persuasions had been secured. The evidence of Mr. Donelan, one of the Roman Catholic Inspectors is quoted. He had been encouraged to apply for his post by Dr. Troy, Roman Catholic Archbishop of Dublin. In the discharge of his office, not only had he never become aware of any attempt at proselytism; but on the contrary, he

had found care exercised for the special protection of Roman Catholics. With direct testimony such as this available, and in the total absence of any attempt to sustain the charges which had been made so recklessly upon all irresponsible occasions, the Commission had no difficulty in coming firmly to the conclusion that the making of converts from the Roman Catholic to the Protestant religion formed no part either of the plans or of the desires of the Society. They say 'no fact has come to our knowledge that leads us to doubt their own repeated disclaimer of having any such intention.'

The Commissioners sum up their approval by stating that in 'the issue of books, the arrangement of the Model Schools, the training of masters and mistresses, their system of rewards, and their directing the public mind so powerfully to education, they have conferred the most extensive and undoubted benefits on Ireland.'

As can be readily understood, the Report of the Education Commission caused no small stir both at Kildare Place and throughout the country. At the ensuing annual meeting of the Society this was manifest in the resolutions and throughout the report. The following extract will illustrate the way in which the situation was approached:

'Your Committee feel that on no previous occasion has the Society been assembled under circumstances so important and interesting. . . .

Everybody is aware that in the summer of the past year the FIRST REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONERS OF IRISH EDUCATION INQUIRY was presented to his Majesty. . . . This Report was looked for with impatience by all classes of the people. The public mind had been awakened, mainly through your exertions, to the important subject of the education of the poor; to the state of torpor and indifference, so prevalent when the Society commenced its operations, had succeeded the most lively and general interest. The *comprehensive* nature of your principles, and the *simplicity* of your plan of proceedings, which carefully avoided unnecessary interference with local managers of schools, had obtained for you very general approbation and support from persons of all denominations; whilst it cannot be denied that the rapid and progressive extension of the institution had attracted the notice and excited the opposition of some who had various motives for opposing the diffusion of a united and Scriptural system of Education for the lower orders throughout Ireland. By some your principles and practice were misunderstood, by others they were misrepresented, and some few were even found hardy enough to impute to the managers of the Institution insincerity and hypocrisy in their professions, and gross breaches of trust and duty in their conduct.

'Amongst the numerous causes, therefore, which conspired to render the Report an object of most

anxious and general expectation was this, that by most persons it was looked to as decisive of the character of the Society. . . .

'The Commissioners personally visited many of your schools and made a strict examination into every branch of your Institution; the result of their inquiry appears in their Report, and to the facts therein detailed we may confidently refer; for clear and convincing proofs . . . of the great success which has marked the progress of the Institution in every department. And your Committee are now enabled to appeal to that decisive testimony, for a satisfactory refutation of the calumnies which the enemies of the Institution had industriously circulated.'

Upon this passage of congratulation there follows, as is natural, a full and detailed setting out of the praise awarded by the Commission to the way the Society had worked.

Then the tone changes. 'This valuable testimony,' the Report proceeds to say, 'in favour of all the branches of your Institution is not, however, without alloy.' Then follow the criticisms of the Commissioners, and their refutation, from the standpoint of the Society. Our notice of the criticisms is being postponed in order to present the trend of Parliamentary thought and action as a whole. The point to be emphasised here is that the Society saw clearly the gravity of the situation and braced themselves

energetically to meet it. The Report, as was manifest to all, had not only cleared them from the charges which calumny had invented; it had also expressed unqualified approval of themselves and their work. But with equal emphasis it had expressed disapproval of the fundamental principles by which that work was actuated. What then was to be done? Without Parliamentary help the work must shrink at once into insignificance. Bearing this fact in mind, three courses were possible. To accept the strictures of the Commission as a vote of censure, and retire from the field; to modify the principles, which in the view of the Commissioners interfered with success; to abide in their settled convictions, and to press energetically forward, undeterred by danger, in the hope of demonstrating to the world that in principle, as well as in practice, their methods were the best that could be devised.

Those who have followed thus far the history of the Society will be at no loss to determine which of the courses was chosen. No surrender! No compromise! Such were the unhesitating conclusions reached. The decks were cleared for action regardless of the odds which had to be faced. Everyone nerved himself for the conflict. Clear expression was given to this determination in the following Resolution:

'After the experience of so many years and upon mature consideration of the valuable mass of addi-

tional information produced by the labours of the Commissioners of Inquiry, we are more than ever convinced of the soundness and wisdom of the principles on which the Society was founded, and of the efficiency of the system on which it acts; and that those principles and this system are peculiarly adapted to the wants and circumstances of Ireland.'

The consistency and the courage thus shown were not destined to go unrewarded. If in the end the conflict proved hopeless, it was marked during its progress by much that pointed to possible success. The spirit and perseverance with which it was conducted elicited general admiration.

At first it seemed as if all might go well. From many parts of the country gratifying reports were coming in as to the diminution of the opposition, and the consequent return of the pupils to the schools. The wholesale acquittal pronounced by the Commission was bearing fruit. In order to make the most of this reaction all the different branches of the Institution were worked at high pressure. They were even extended; everything went full speed ahead, and hopes were high. 'Your committee,' says the fourteenth Report, 'are confidently of opinion that the opposition must be temporary. It arises from a political irritation of which we are not the cause, but from which we, with others, are sufferers. In order to excite a

spirit of hostility to us, we have been misrepresented and maligned; but misrepresentation can only succeed for a season. We have always courted inquiry, and all candid persons perceive at last on which side the truth lies when charges are made, whilst there are no means of investigating them at hand, but are abandoned as soon as an efficient tribunal is provided. So convinced are we that those who are hostile to us will relinquish their opposition when truth prevails (and in a free country, with a free press, truth must in the end prevail), that we have never given way to any feelings but those of regret; and have replied to angry attacks with firmness, but with courtesy and consideration.

'When charges have been made against us, our first move has ever been to make strict inquiry whether they were justified or not. If we have fallen into errors we have immediately corrected them when practicable; if not at variance with principle, we have given way to the feelings and opinions of others.

'Of the charge of proselytism, the members of the Roman Catholic Church must now see the falsehood and futility; they know the fact that not an attempt towards it has received the smallest countenance from the Society in any of our schools. They know that if it were to happen we should instantly withdraw our assistance from any school in which it occurred.'

When the results of the work for 1826 came to be gathered in, they showed that the optimism of the Society was not without foundation. During 1825, the first year of the Education Inquiry, with a view to demonstrating the failure of Kildare Place, determined efforts had been made to empty and destroy the schools. Partly from this cause, partly because at this time it was determined to cease helping schools connected with other societies, there was a decrease in the Kildare Place schools. It was of short duration. Nearly all the lost ground was won back. In 1826 the schools rose again, and numbered 1477, or within 13 of the maximum which had been reached in 1824.

It took strenuous work to move forward in this fashion; for quite a new set of difficulties had to be faced. The determination to help no schools except their own, though adopted for right reasons, of which we shall presently have something to say, caused friction in new quarters and alienated friends. Uncertainty as to the future of education predominated everywhere; those who desired schools shrank from co-operating and incurring expense in connexion with an organisation, which, however vigorous to-day, might have ceased to exist to-morrow. The Parliamentary grants were no longer dealt out with the liberality or the promptitude which the engagements of the Society required. Pending the Report of the Commission, the £30,000 which was absolutely necessary for

current expenses was cut down to £20,000. The missing £10,000 was given before the year closed; but most severe inconvenience was caused by the unforeseen delay. This postponement, and others of a similar kind which were to follow, added to the labours of the Society, already sufficiently exacting, the responsibility of arranging with the bank for large overdrafts, upon the personal security of its members. Even worse, because incurable, was the determination which became apparent on the part of the Government to keep the annual vote within strict limits. For 1825 and 1826 upwards of £30,000 was granted; for the remaining years the total was only £25,000. It followed that the strictest economy had to be practised in working the existing machinery. For development nothing was available. The building grants and the equipment grants which had proved such valuable instruments for stimulating local energy had, of necessity, to be discontinued.

Even had no forces been arrayed against the Society from without, these internal difficulties might well have daunted hearts less stout. The cessation of hostilities, however, was more apparent than real. The proclamation of the good faith of the Society by the Commissioners lessened local fears and prejudices; pupils returned, schools sought or renewed connexion. But the great political movement which was to end in Emancipation swept onwards with ever

increasing force, and its leaders found in the Commissioners' disapproval of Kildare Place principles fresh encouragement for emphasising the educational portion of their agitation.

In January, 1826, the Roman Catholic bishops published a series of resolutions, in which they laid down their educational requirements. The resolutions cut at the root of the Kildare Place system by demanding that no book (the Bible, though not mentioned, was of course included) should be used in the instruction of the pupils, of which the 'Roman Catholic Bishop of the diocese' disapproved; and by requiring that in no case should teachers be appointed without reference to their religion. They stated with emphasis that the bishops would withhold their concurrence and support from any system of education which did not fully accord with the principles which the resolutions expressed.

Resolutions such as these made it abundantly clear that though Roman Catholics might continue, as they did, to attend and to support the Kildare Place Schools, they did it in opposition to the express direction of their ecclesiastical rulers. The spirit thus shown found expression in an endless variety of tones, and on all possible occasions. Belligerent letters were addressed to Kildare Place by priests. The Roman Catholic Education Society denounced the Kildare Place Society as 'anti-Catholic and unchristian,' and as one which left the children

under its care uneducated in their duty to God and to man. It did not shrink even from stating that the Kildare Place Society promoted crime and immorality, and that it was opposed to the public peace.[1]

The politicians, led by O'Connell, went to still greater lengths. The destruction of the Society was made a part of the Emancipation programme; its administration of the Parliamentary grants was represented as a reckless and unprincipled abuse of public money.[2] In fact, as the Committee themselves said, the charges from these sources embraced 'nearly every imputation that could by possibility be brought forward against any public body.'[3]

As a help towards entering into the feelings which instigated these attacks, it is proposed to devote some attention to the views and the attitude of one of the most remarkable men of that time. If the speeches delivered at the annual meeting have enabled us to understand both sides of the question in 1820, the correspondence with the celebrated Dr. Doyle, Roman Catholic Bishop of Leighlin, will be equally useful in illuminating the fiercer and more hand-to-hand conflicts of 1827 and the following years.

In Dr. Doyle the Society were confronted by one

[1] Quoted in Report of Proceedings of the seventeenth Annual Meeting.

[2] Speech of O'Connell published in *Evening Post*, May 27, 1828.

[3] Report xix. p. 42.

who was both a zealous ecclesiastic and a fervent patriot. Such was his ability that when he, O'Connell, and others, were examined before a Committee of the House of Lords, one distinguished peer said to another that Dr. Doyle as far surpassed O'Connell as O'Connell surpassed other men.[1]

Two extracts from his writings, one referring to the Ireland of 1808, the other describing its condition in 1824, will sufficiently exhibit the feelings by which he was actuated.

'I have read,' he writes, 'of the persecutions of Nero, Domitian, Genseric, and Attila, as well as of the barbarities of the sixteenth century. I have compared them with those inflicted on my own country, and I protest to God that the latter, in my opinion, have exceeded in duration, extent, and intensity, all that has ever been endured by mankind for justice sake. These Catholics are now emerging from this persecution, and . . . they are employed with one hand in defending themselves against the aggression of their implacable enemies, and with the other cleansing the holy places, rebuilding the sanctuary, making new vessels for the sacrifice, and worshipping most devoutly at their half-raised altars. The recollection of their past sufferings is far from being effaced. The comparative freedom which they enjoy is a relaxation of pressure, rather than a rightful posses-

[1] Fitzpatrick, *Life, Times and Correspondence of Right Rev. Dr. Doyle*, i. 399.

sion. As religionists they are suffered to exist, and the law restrains the persecutors, but persecutes them of itself. They are obliged to sweat and toil for those very ministers of another religion who contributed to forge their chains. Their hay and corn, their fleece and lambs, with the roots on which they feed, they are still compelled to offer at an altar which they deem profane, they still are bound to rebuild and ornament their old parish church and spire, that they may stand in the midst of them as records of the right of conquest, or of the triumph of law over equity and the public good. They still have to attend the bailiff when he calls, with the warrant of the churchwardens, to collect their last shilling (if one should happen to remain), that the empty church may have a stove, the clerk a surplice, the communion table elements to be sanctified, though perhaps there be no one to partake of them. . . . Such is their condition, whilst some half-thatched cabin or unfurnished house collects them on Sundays to render thanks to God for even these blessings, and to tell their woes to heaven.'[1]

'Our country is still enslaved. A tyranny generated by the laws, introduced by a worthless, heartless, and bigoted faction to the fireside of every peasant, requires of us all to take from our competence, or even

[1] *Life, Times and Correspondence of the Right Rev. Dr. Doyle*, W. J. Fitzpatrick, vol. i. pp. 37, 38.

wretchedness, whatever may have escaped the hand of the despoiler, and consecrate it to our public and personal redemption. Our religion continues to be maligned; the course of public justice is still disturbed; the legislator at the close of six centuries, is unacquainted with the state of Ireland. The public press, which should be a medium of light, has become a vehicle of slander, and they who persecute us seem to think "they thereby render a service to God." It is our duty therefore to labour with one heart and one mind in such a manner as the law permits, to vindicate our religion, to relieve the oppressed, to enlighten the legislature, and to establish if possible, the sway of truth and justice in the room of prejudice and error.'[1]

To the 'duty' thus vigorously outlined the life of Dr. Doyle was strenuously devoted. We find him dealing with public affairs first in 1818, when he interfered on behalf of Mr. La Touche in the Carlow election. In the following year, when not 33 years of age, he was chosen Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin. It thus happens that the beginning of the Bishop's public life may be said to have synchronised with the opening of O'Connell's campaign against the Kildare Place Society.

In Dr. Doyle's plans for the amelioration of the condition of Ireland, education held a foremost place. Keenly alive at once to the general desire for

[1] *Life*, vol. i. p. 370.

learning, and to the inadequacy of the provision for meeting the demand, he longed for the means of supplying such education as he, a Roman Catholic Bishop, could approve.

Had the trend of the times been different, it is possible that he might have co-operated with the Education Society. Like the Society he was in favour of united education.[1]

For Model Schools which he established in his diocese, he employed masters trained at Kildare Place.[2] He bore public testimony to the excellence of the Society's books, and often recommended their purchase.[3] In the most emphatic way he expressed his approval of scriptural instruction, under what he considered proper restrictions. In the schools of his diocese he prescribed the reading of Scripture as a part of the religious instruction to be given each day to all the children.[4] His evidence as to the excellence of the educational, as distinguished from

[1] Report of Select Committee of the House of Commons, Session 1830, 4615. Bishop Doyle has been represented as favouring undenominational teaching. Even a cursory reading of the evidence referred to in this and the following notes, will suffice to refute an opinion so indefensible. He spoke strongly in favour of uniting the pupils of different religions for secular work; but he demanded that, in every school, provision should be made for giving distinctive religious instruction by accredited instructors, to each denomination.

[2] Report of Select Committee of the House of Commons, Session 1830. See also 4606, 4607.

[3] *Ibid.*, 4627, 4628.

[4] *Ibid.*, 4622 and 4637.

the religious system of the Society, amounted to unqualified praise, 'if it were freed from these inconveniences' (excluding catechetical instruction, and prescribing the reading of the Scriptures without note or comment) 'it would be hard to devise a system better calculated to effect good.'[1] No heat of controversy prevented his recognising the excellence of the individual characters of those who governed at Kildare Place.

Where so much unaffected respect and approval existed it is perhaps rather the hostility of the Bishop than his support that requires explanation. At first sight he was certainly not the man who would have seemed likely to become the determined foe of such an organisation. As a matter of fact, in cases where the only possible schools appeared to be those of the Society he sanctioned their attendance by Roman Catholics, and ordered the strict observance of the Kildare Place Rules.[2] This, however, was a different matter from expressing anything like approval of the Kildare Place system as a whole. The

[1] Report of Select Committee of the House of Commons, Session 1830, 4636.

[2] The following minute was entered in the books of Ballyna School, Co. Kildare :

'Monday, Aug. 29, 1825. I was much gratified, in visiting this school, to observe the good order and cleanliness prevailing in it, as well as the proficiency which the children seem to make under the guidance of their master and the superintendence of the Patron and Visiters (*sic.*). I am anxious also to record my wish that *during the connexion of the school with the Kildare Place Society* all

extracts quoted below justified the Society in maintaining that a system which obtained such commendation from the Bishop could not be contrary to Roman Catholic religion; they did not prove that Dr. Doyle was favourable to their system in itself. What he did was to extend a statesmanlike toleration, so long as nothing more in accordance with his views was in sight. The moment there appeared a prospect of attaining to a system of public education, free from the 'inconveniences' of Kildare Place, the Bishop threw all his force upon the side of those who were organising the opposition. O'Connell's attack, and the formation of the Roman Catholic Education Society[1] gave him the first opportunity. Joining the new movement, his efforts were directed towards obtaining a separate Parliamentary grant, to be administered by Roman Catholics. Disappointed in

catechisms and books of religious instruction be used by the children *only after or before school hours.* 'JAMES DOYLE.'

Having visited Mountrath School on Feb. 18, 1823, Dr. Doyle recorded his approval of it thus:

'The appearance of the children and the attention paid to them by the master during my visit afford reason to hope that the school will tend to fulfil the wishes of the friends of the education of the poor.

'The high character and good sense of the Patrons and Managers are a sufficient pledge that the wise principle of bestowing the blessings of education on the children of the poor, *without interfering with their particular religious opinion*, will not, at any time, be departed from. 'J. DOYLE.'

[1] See above, pp. 74 and 91.

this he instigated, and co-operated with, the demand for the Commission of Inquiry.[1] From the report of the Commissioners he hoped for much. What he thought of it when it appeared may be gathered from the pencillings in his own copy, which his biographer has reproduced.[2] Here are some extracts: 'A deliberate lie,' 'Justification of all our allegations against the Kildare Place Society,' 'Subversion of our religion aimed at,' 'Shuffling and contradiction.' His scorn of their proposal to continue to trust the Society with the training of teachers for all schools, was thus expressed in an unpublished pamphlet:[3]

'Was there anything ever more silly conceived, except by such a man as Mr. Leslie Foster, who, as our country people say of many of their hedge schoolmasters, seems to be "cracked with learning"? Was there anything ever conceived—I won't say by a grave body of men, or even by Irish public functionaries, but by any set of fools and drivellers—so anomalous, so absurd, so irreligious, and so impotent, as to vest the religious instruction of the youth of an entire nation in such a class of fanatics as this project would create.'

His next move was to enter the lists himself. In his own diocese he ordered the withdrawal of all Roman Catholic children from the Kildare Place schools, and further by a series of attacks in the public press upon the reports, and the statistics published by the Society,

[1] See above, p. 941. [2] Vol. i. p. 424. [3] *Life*, vol. i. p. 427.

he sought alike to disprove their usefulness, and to impeach their veracity.

Procuring in December, 1826, a copy of the report which had been published at the beginning of February, he set to work to expose its 'errors' by directing the Parish Priests of his diocese to obtain for him returns from their schools. By the following March these returns were available, and when summed up they showed, to the satisfaction of the Bishop, that of 49 schools claimed by the Society in Queen's County and Counties Kildare and Carlow, 19 had been withdrawn or closed, and 5 more would probably soon be withdrawn. The deductions as to attendances were still more sweeping. The Society represented 4005 pupils as attending; the Bishop's informants brought the figures down to 817, of whom 427 were Roman Catholics.

In a letter addressed to Daniel O'Connell, and contributed to the *Dublin Evening Post*, the Bishop with customary vigour and incisiveness proceeded to make the most of these results. In the conclusion of the letter the following passages occur:

'What I have stated should, however, be enough to enable every candid man to estimate the extent of the imposition practised upon the Society, and propagated unconsciously by the Society itself in their official papers. The Public, the Commissioners of Education Inquiry, the Government, the Parliament, have all been deceived or imposed on. Much

art—much intrigue—much misrepresentation—much of the *suggestio falsi*, and the *suppressio veri*, have been employed to affect a purpose only apparently good. . . .

'The object I have principally if not alone in view is, to convince the discerning public, in whom there is yet remaining some love of justice and truth, that in all our efforts either made or to be made, we are contending with fraud and bigotry and corruption, and against a faction who consider all things good and equitable, whereby we may be depressed and their own monopoly secured.'

The slender foundation upon which this attack was based rendered the reply of the Committee easy. Under no circumstances, it maintained, could statistics of schools collected for 1825 be satisfactorily refuted by returns compiled in the last months of 1826. The comparison instituted by the Bishop was the more illusory, because he had issued in August 1826, a pastoral which denounced the Society in no measured terms. It was not till the withdrawals which the Pastoral produced took effect that the census of the Parish Priests began.

The whole of the Kildare Place document, which, like the Bishop's letter, is lengthy, is couched in the moderate language which is characteristic of all the utterances of the Society. With elaborate fulness of detail it substantiates the accuracy of the published report, and it concludes by inviting on all hands the

most minute and searching investigation both of the principles and the proceedings of the Society.

When next the Bishop wrote he confined himself for the most part to generalities. Where he did challenge some of the particular statements of the Society they were able in replying to produce authentic evidence as to the accuracy of their statements. As for the rest, they were content to say :

'The Committee being of opinion that Dr. Doyle, in his reply had not sustained his charges brought against the Society by his letter of the 17th of March last ; that he had in fact left untouched the vindication put forward in their statement of the 24th of that month ; and feeling (as they have always most strongly felt) great reluctance to be engaged in newspaper controversy, determined not to publish any remarks on Dr. Doyle's letter of the 27th day of March last, in the Journals of the day.'

It was not to be expected that this failure to impugn the substantial accuracy of the Kildare Place reports would diminish the vigour of Dr. Doyle's opposition. Everything was now making in the direction of the triumph of the demand for Emancipation. It seemed as if the growing power of the Roman Catholics must soon place within their reach an educational system ideal from their point of view. One of the principles upon which Dr. Doyle had been wont to insist was the duty of lifting up the voice and proclaiming wrongs

loudly. This duty he discharged in connection with the Education Society with exemplary diligence. It was a 'sectarian society.' Its grants promoted 'dissension and discord,' and prevented goodwill and the union of the people. The Government employed it 'to disturb the peace, to spread abroad religious discord, and to mar the progress of education.' Such were some of the charges which the excitement of the times produced even at the hands of Dr. Doyle.

There is nothing in the history of Kildare Place which more conclusively shows the spirit of its leaders, and demonstrates their claim to the admiration of posterity, than the way in which, regardless of danger, undeterred by daily vituperation, they pressed forward with the work of education. The amount accomplished by individual members of Committee was extraordinary. As for Mr. Jackson, wherever he went, the Society was with him, on circuit, on holiday, in search of health (his own, or his sister's), now at Leamington, now at Harrogate; everywhere there came reports and closely-written letters, bringing minute details of what was doing, and what was threatening. And always, without delay, he returned the needed answers, filled with wise counsel, and careful details as to action. Neither in Mr. Jackson's, nor indeed in any of the letters, does anything of the nature of panic appear. They are characterised throughout by the quiet

confidence which comes from a cause in which the writers place whole-hearted belief. Their friends in England expressed but the truth when they said, the Kildare Place Society 'proceeds on its splendid career with unabated zeal.'[1]

Nor were the Committee left without events to encourage them. As the different Reports of the Commission of Inquiry were issued, one fact after another told in their favour. The reasonableness of their rule as to the *compulsory* reading of Holy Scripture, received confirmation from the number of schools where *voluntary* Scripture reading prevailed. If there were 6058 schools where the Bible was read, if 4179 of them were unconnected with any Society, and if 2607 were under Roman Catholic masters; further, if a large proportion of these teachers must of necessity give only such instruction as met with general approval, because their incomes depended upon school fees, it seemed difficult to maintain that the reading of Holy Scripture was really inconsistent with Irish wants.

The fact that the Society could, and did minister to Roman Catholic needs, was shown by the authoritative publication of the numbers at their schools. In their desire to guard against any possible charges of partiality, or improper influence, the Committee had never inquired as to the beliefs of those who came to their schools, and had, in conse-

[1] Report of British and Foreign Society for 1826, p. 16.

quence, no means of showing, from their own returns, what the relative proportion might be. When the Commissioners announced that of 57,129 pupils[1] in attendance more than half were Roman Catholics, it was no longer possible for anyone to maintain that those who formed the larger portion of the population derived no benefit from the Kildare Place Schools.

Similarly, the solid volume of educational work which the Society had accomplished, was incontrovertible when it was made plain[2] that, large as were the sums which Parliament had voted, the amounts contributed by the localities to the schools were even larger; and when the Commissioners gave publicity to the fact that during the time the Society had been in operation, the numbers of 'schools and scholars' in Ireland had exhibited 'an augmentation not very far from threefold.'

Even more encouraging was the complete failure which attended the constructive efforts of the Commissioners. They had objected to the Kildare Place principle, they had suggested a scheme for remedying the alleged defects, they had been authorised to take the necessary steps for bringing their own plan into effective operation, they had gone to work *con amore* in pursuit of their ideal—only to find that in the mere attempt to arrange

[1] These figures, being taken from the reports of the Roman Catholic clergy, represent a minimum.

[2] Report xvii., Resolution 2, etc.

the preliminaries, they ran hopelessly against a wall of passive resistance. It was inevitable that the Society should find in this infelicitous attempt at amendment proof conclusive as to the soundness of their own tried system, and the fullest confirmation of their belief that it, and it alone, was suited to the peculiar circumstances and needs of Ireland.

Meanwhile the Kildare Place work was pushed along steadily in all its departments. Each year saw the Training School busied in sending out some 150 masters and some 60 mistresses. The output for 1829 and for 1830 was exceeded only twice in previous years. Each year saw the issue of some 60,000 of the Society's Cheap Books. Each year saw their 'Lending Libraries' obtaining wider and wider recognition. Each year, too, found the administration more and more exact; the office organisation was being developed along the lines of a system which emphasised personal responsibility, and gave full scope for individual excellence. Plans were laid for the appointment of permanent head inspectors to make still more complete the excellent supervision exercised by Mr. Veevers. The Committee carefully matured a scheme for bringing a series of provincial organisations into active existence for the furtherance of the Kildare Place principles. What was perhaps best of all with a view to the possibility of finally possessing the land, was the steady increase

accomplished both in the number of the schools, and in the number of the pupils attending them. The schools rose steadily from 1825, an average of 60 being added each year, until in 1830 they were 1634. The average number of pupils in attendance at the schools was 67 in 1824, in 1831 it had risen to 84·5. When this could be accomplished with resources so limited as to preclude the building and equipment grants which, in better days had proved so attractive, and in the face of an opposition so influential and so determined, what would not be possible if only the Government once for all decided to support the Kildare Place system, and to provide adequate funds?

So reasoned the Committee, and so reasoned many others, as the following letter will show.

Copy of a letter addressed to J. D. Jackson, Esq., Secretary to the Kildare Place Society from the Revd. John Johnston, Banbridge, February 27th, 1830.

Sir,

As the period approaches when the concerns of the Kildare Street Society will again come under the consideration of the British Parliament, I beg to assure you that the friends of education in the North of Ireland look with deep interest to the result. While, in other parts of the land, your Society has been opposed or regarded with suspicion, we, in this neighbourhood, early felt its importance and became fellow-workers with it in the education of the poor; and, when I now review the results of a few years' exertion,

I feel called upon by a sense of gratitude publicly to state them that they may be an encouragement to your Committee while they are labouring, through much unmerited calumny, to promote the public good.

The first important grant made by your Society since my settlement in this part of the land, 18 years ago, was to that steady friend of education, H. Hamilton, Esq.—the sum was, I think, £60. In consequence of it he was enabled by a grant of nearly twice as much from the landlord, Alex. Stewart, Esq., to rear two school-houses. [Here follow particulars of eleven schools, one promoted by Roman Catholics, four by Presbyterians, three by Quakers, and three by Irish Churchmen.]

All these 13 schools in which your grants have elicited local subscriptions generally to the amount of four or five times as much as you gave, are situated within about 5 square miles of where I now write; and on seven of them where the houses have been newly built, your grant of £200 has been attended with an additional local expenditure of about £900. They afford daily education to about 1000 children on a plan that reaches the poorest of the people, that makes no distinction between Catholic and Protestant, as both are promiscuously assembled in them, and which is as far superior to that which existed when your Society commenced its benign career, as the meridian light is superior to the morning dawn.

Within these bounds, during the same time, 7 young teachers have been raised up, who, through the training of your Model School, have been prepared to fill up important situations; and the general taste for a substantial education has been amazingly advanced.

While viewing with heartfelt pleasure this delightful march of general improvement, I could not without great

regret understand that the exertions of your Society have been very much crippled from the want of an increase in the late Government grants.

Even in a neighbourhood, where, from the foregoing description it might be thought we were perfectly organised, there are still several school-houses wanted, fully to provide for our dense population; and when, to the enquiries of the yet unaccommodated districts, wishing for school-houses and applying for aid to build them, the answer from year to year lately has been that you had no funds for this purpose, I have thought surely if the Government could see with their own eyes the good which has already been effected, they would be far from paralysing the Society by denying it the means of extending its operations.

Education unaccompanied with the Scriptures I could never approve, for it would be calculated to make the people wise to do evil, while to do good they would have no knowledge. Education with the peculiarities of any party does not suit a country so divided into sects as this is, and could not therefore fairly claim the support of the Government. But a well ordered system of general instruction with the reading of the Scriptures connected with it, shuns both extremes, and seems to promise the happiest results to the nation at large. Such is the system promoted by the Kildare Street Society, and as such, it has a just claim on the public and national funds. If either to a latitudinarian or a sectarian system of education, the Government should ever direct its resources—doleful will be the day to our unhappy country.

But should the Government steadily and liberally promote a plan that has been found to work well, instead of trying any new and dangerous experiment, clamour will soon become silent, and the people, permitted to follow their own

judgment, will, I have no doubt, gladly and generally accept the offered boon, and hand it to their children in despite of every effort that may be made to deprive them of it.—Yours, etc.

(Signed) JOHN JOHNSTON.

P.S.—I have merely traced the progress of education in my own sphere of exertion as a Presbyterian Minister. I see in every direction beyond these bounds similar traces of the Society's success, but, as I could not exhibit these with the same precision, I have confined myself to well-known and incontrovertible facts. J. J.

To the above testimony from one who had himself witnessed the revolution effected by the Society, may be added two more pieces of evidence from without; the first, two letters in which the Secretary of the National Society consults the Education Society as the recognised authority of that time. The second, one more quotation from the reports of the British and Foreign Society:

NATIONAL SOCIETY, CENTRAL SCHOOLS.
WESTMINSTER, *July* 18, 1838.

SIR,

May I request the favour of your assistance in a department of business which the National Society is likely to pursue more extensively than has been its practice hitherto—I allude to the inspecting of schools. A former publication of the Society for which you act informs me that 'a regular system of inspecting the schools, assisted from the funds at their disposal, has been adopted, and that when the reports of inspectors are favourable the Society has given a pecuniary gratuity to the teacher.'

The Committee of the National Society will feel much obliged if they may be favoured with a copy of the regulations under which the business referred to is conducted.

The kind attention they have previously received from the Kildare Place Association induces them to hope that their present application will be favourably received.—I remain, sir, your faithful servant,

J. C. WIGRAM, Secretary.

To the SECRETARY of the
Kildare Place Society, Dublin.

WESTMINSTER, *August* 3, 1838.

SIR,

I have waited to examine the papers which you had the kindness to send, with a note on 29th July, before acknowledging them, and am now better able to appreciate the very valuable information which the Society has obtained through your obliging assistance.

The Committee desire me to return you their best thanks for this favour, and if it is not trespassing unduly upon your kindness to ask that they may also have the benefit of a copy of each of the Annual Reports with the appendices, and the Schoolmaster's Manual, which are referred to in the instructions prepared for the use of the inspectors. If these documents are to be purchased in London, they would gladly avail themselves of directions for the purpose instead of giving you further trouble. I ought also to mention that, through the kindness of the Kildare Place Society on a former occasion, the Committee already possess the instructions concerning needlework with books of specimens, etc. The Committee would also gladly be informed what rate of payment, by way of salary, and for their travelling expenses, is given to the inspectors, and whether it is found in practice

that they can examine so much as one school a day in the effectual manner described in their instructions.

In apology for this fresh appeal to your attention I am directed to state that the Lords of the Treasury have very recently applied to the Committee of the National Society to inspect all the schools which have been established in England and Wales by aid of the grants of Parliament, and to report particulars to their Lordships for the satisfaction of the House of Commons.—I remain, sir, your obliged and faithful servant,

JOSEPH C. WIGRAM, Secretary.

MR. SERGEANT JACKSON.

Extract from the British and Foreign Report, 1829.

The resources for this object (School Instruction) have placed Ireland considerably in advance of England in the number and efficiency of her Primary Schools. The Kildare Place Society pays particular attention to systematic arrangement in its schools, and to the training of teachers. It has also conferred a very important benefit on the country by its grant of cheap books for schools and school libraries. These are now extensively read on both sides of the channel, being found excellently adapted to supply what has long been a desideratum, the want of books for the humbler ranks at once cheap, useful, and entertaining.

(A long paragraph follows highly commending the system of these books.)

Your Committee trust these remarks will not be considered out of place, when called to express their sense of the obligation under which all who speak the English language have been laid by the publication of the Dublin books.

CHAPTER VII.

PARLIAMENT AND IRISH EDUCATION.

THE year 1812 saw 'a new principle' applied to education in Ireland. The Charter School policy was to be once for all abandoned. State aided proselytism was to cease. Henceforth education was to be given without interference with religion.

The Commissioners of Education in Ireland, three of whom were bishops of the Established Church, came unanimously to this conclusion in their fourteenth and final Report. Their view met with instantaneous acceptance. Differences many arose as to the application of the principle; the principle itself was never officially assailed.

The first attempt on the part of Government to put the principle into practice was made, as we have seen,[1] by Peel when Chief Secretary. In his view the Education Society furnished the required machinery and constitution. He therefore made them recipients of annual Parliamentary grants. For some years the experiment was eminently successful. Then came

[1] See above, pp. 31-34.

the attack of O'Connell and the Roman Catholic clergy upon the compulsory reading of Holy Scripture. These efforts met with support in both Houses from those who were in favour of Emancipation, and resulted in the appointment, in 1824, of the Commission of Education Inquiry. As has been shown in the last chapter, the Commissioners awarded high praise to the way in which the Education Society worked. Their commendation, however, was tempered by important, and, as the event proved, most serious criticisms.

The criticisms were twofold.

The Commissioners thought it inexpedient for the Society to give pecuniary help to schools connected with other educational societies.

They expressed disapproval of the fundamental principle of the Society, which required that the Holy Scriptures, without note or comment, should be read in every school, by all pupils who had attained to suitable proficiency.

The first of these criticisms need not detain us long. Like everything else connected with the Society it has been viewed through the distorting medium of political agitation, and much misunderstanding has resulted; so much so that the Society's action in the matter has been construed into an abandonment of their tolerant principle, and all the hostility to which they were subjected has been traced to this false step.

As has been fully explained above,[1] the hostility took origin in causes of a very different, and of a much wider kind. We shall now see that what the Society did arose partly from the liberality of principle which desired to look with friendly eye on all things educational, partly from a wish to make their own system as far reaching as possible. They may have been guilty of an indiscretion. They certainly committed no serious fault.

Stated baldly, the charge against them was that they had connected themselves with three notoriously proselytising institutions, the London Hibernian, the Association for Discountenancing Vice, and the Baptist Society, and had gone so far as to apply a portion of their funds to the support of schools belonging to these unpopular establishments.[2]

It is not the case that the Kildare Place Society had connexion with any of the societies mentioned. One of the societies, the London Hibernian, applied for a grant in 1820, and in so doing stated, through their applicant, the Archbishop of Tuam, that their schools came under the regulations of the Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor. In reply, the Committee asked for full information as to the constitution and work of the Hibernian Society, and when this was not forthcoming they took no further action in the matter.

But while it is not true that they connected them-

[1] P. 75. [2] *Fifty Years of Concession to Ireland*, i. p. 121.

selves with these societies, it is true that they did not at first consider it their duty to refuse help to a school simply because it received help from another organisation. Desiring as they did to be as widely useful as possible, they had placed their training school and their publications at the disposal of all who wished to use them, provided the out-of-pocket expenses were defrayed. Against this liberal view of their functions it does not appear that criticism was ever directed. In assisting schools connected with other societies they were but following out this policy. The granting of money was a new departure; but the step was justified in the opinion of the Society, by requiring that the schools which accepted the grants should conform to the Kildare Place rules, and so become identified with the Society.

As there is probably no one point upon which there has been so much misunderstanding and misrepresentation, it will be right to hear two of the prominent members of the Committee speaking for themselves. In the Appendix to the First Report of the Commission there is much information upon the subject. The following questions and answers, from the examinations of Mr. Bewley and Mr. Warren, are selected as being fairly representative of all that was said.

'Are you aware that many of the schools under the management of the Society for the Education of the Poor are also in connexion with other societies?'

Mr. Bewley, 'I believe there are several, but the proportion I am not aware of; there must be several.'

'Do you not believe that the rules of those societies are incompatible with the strict interpretation of the rules of your Society?'

Mr. Bewley, 'I am not aware what the rules of those societies are—some are represented to be so; but it seemed to be our object to embrace all schools that would admit our principles, believing our principles to be those that would be most advantageous for the community in Ireland, and therefore we rather wished to draw all schools into our principles than to cast them off, because they received aid from other societies.'

'Are not many of the schools of the Kildare Place Society in common with one or other of those societies?' (London Hibernian, and Association for Discountenancing Vice).

Mr. Warren, 'Yes, a great many.'

'Do you not think that at all inconsistent with the principles of the Kildare Place Society?'

Mr. Warren, 'I do not think it inconsistent, but very inexpedient.'

'If it is the object of either of those societies to interfere with the religious opinions of individuals taught in the schools, must it not be inconsistent with the principles of your Society?'

Mr. Warren, 'I think not; I admit that if we were to make grants to those societies there would

be a gross inconsistency between our principle and our practice, but I see no inconsistency in assisting individual schools, although they may be in connexion with one or other of those societies. I consider the two institutions alluded to separately; the Hibernian Society state their object to be to establish schools exactly upon the principles of our Society; my own opinion is that they only tolerate such schools, and that their real object is to go much further, and that the persons in their employment sometimes use indirect means for that purpose; whether I am right or wrong upon this point it is a very general supposition throughout the country, and if we were to grant aid to that society (which we have universally refused to do) we should be acting an unworthy part; but although such is the object (I believe) of many of the members of that society, yet they require no pledge from the individual managers of the schools in connexion with theirs that would render it inconsistent for the most conscientious person to pledge himself to us, strictly to adhere to our rules and to keep inviolate such engagement; the managers of that society say to a schoolmaster in the country, "we will give you a certain salary if you have a certain number of children in attendance and if you take care that they read the Scriptures." I believe they require nothing more than that from the gentlemen in the country who become the managers of their schools;

at the same time I apprehend their object would be to go further if they could, but they are satisfied with going so far if they cannot go further; now with respect to the Association for Discountenancing Vice, suppose a gentleman, who has a school in the country in connexion with that association, were to say that he would pledge himself to adhere to our rules, I apprehend that there is no contract between him and that society which would prevent his keeping his engagement with us, and, consequently, if he adhere to his promise, the school will be conducted conformably to our system; and, I believe, that in many cases great good would be done by our thus affording aid to schools in connexion with the Hibernian Society, especially as our principles would be adhered to if the individual to whom the grant is made attends to his pledge and all that underhand work be done away with. I understand from Mr. Donelan that this has actually taken place in such of the schools connected with the Hibernian Society in the County of Cork as have received aid from us; he very lately told me he found those schools were conducted upon the strictest principles of our Society, and that he did not find any deviation from them; at the same time I am satisfied that when our schools receive aid from other societies, it leaves a great opening for improper conduct, and that it would be very expedient to disconnect our schools from all other societies whatsoever.'

With regard to this evidence, which is typical of all that was said upon the subject, there is no doubt room for divergency of opinion. Some may hold with Mr. Bewley that the hope of an unlimited extension of Kildare Place principle warranted the granting of aid to the schools of other societies. Others, with Mr. Warren, will consider that, owing to the risk of misunderstanding, such grants were highly inexpedient. None who view the matter dispassionately will discover in Mr. Bewley, or Mr. Warren, or any of the others, conspirators who entered into an unholy alliance, for the purpose of playing false to their own principles. There is nothing of the unmasked conspirator in the readiness with which the idea of ceasing to aid the schools is received. It is plain that the question had all along given rise to different views. We are not surprised to find that even before the issue of the Commissioner's report, the Committee had themselves resolved to help schools connected with other societies no more.

Widely different in importance, and in consequences, was the criticism of the Commission with reference to the compulsory use of Holy Scripture, and the regulations adopted in order to give effect to the Third Law of the Society, *i.e.* 'to afford the same facilities for education to all classes of professing Christians, without any attempt to interfere with the peculiar religious opinions of any.'

For administrative purposes this law took the form of the following three fundamental regulations :

'First—That the appointment of governors and teachers, and also the admission of scholars in all your schools, shall be uninfluenced by religious distinction, but subject to this qualification—the managers are left at perfect liberty to nominate such teachers as they may think best suited to the circumstances of their respective schools.

Second—That all Catechisms and books of religious controversy shall be excluded during school hours ; but the Society at the same time recommend that the days and hours during which the schools are open for general and united instruction, shall be so arranged that ample opportunity for particular religious instruction, out of school hours, be afforded to the pastors and parents of the children.

Third—That the Sacred Scriptures, without note or comment, shall be read in the schools by those scholars who have obtained a suitable proficiency in reading. But the Society leave it to the discretion of the managers of schools to use either the Authorised or Rhemish Version, and to point out such parts to be read in the schools as they shall judge best suited to the capacities and attainments of the children, and most likely to be read with advantage by them. The Society, however, recommend that the sacred volume be not used as a school-book, from which children should be taught to spell or read, but shall

be always read with reverence and solemnity, as the revealed Word of God, and rather as a privilege and record of proficiency than as a task.'

In the opinion of the Commissioners the Society had not been wholly successful in enforcing any of these regulations. It was, however, in connection with the third that the cardinal difficulty arose. The Commissioners found 'that the use of the Testament without note or comment as a school book, or the reading of it by children, save under the direction of their pastors, or persons appointed by them, was considered contrary to the discipline of the Roman Catholic Church.' As a natural consequence the reading of the Bible was often wholly omitted; even when this was not the case, the reading was 'frequently a matter of form.'

It has been possible, during the course of this book, to show that, in many ways, the work done, and the models exhibited at Kildare Place, favourably affected the progress of education, not only in Ireland, but in Scotland and England, and indeed wherever English-speaking people went. For this reason Kildare Place has a serious claim upon all who study the history of education.

In the system of religious instruction devised by the Society, a further and more living interest is to be found. Information certainly, help possibly, may be derived from an examination of the first systematic attempt to introduce undenominational teaching on a large scale.

That the undertaking was possible, and should be attempted, was the general feeling of the time. To the proofs of this already given, may be added the following letters of Peel. In January, 1813, he wrote to Lord Sidmouth[1]: 'The system of Education in Ireland must be a very limited one which should be introduced, or even suspected by the Catholics to be introduced, with any view, however remote, of converting their children to the Protestant faith.'

In April, 1813, he wrote to the Attorney General of Ireland (Saurin):[2]

'The preamble of the act should, I think, advert to the benefits which must be derived in a national point of view from the education of the lower classes of society to the expediency of establishing in Ireland a systematic and uniform plan for their instruction, and it might be added that, under the peculiar circumstances of Ireland, all interference in the religious tenets of any particular class should be excluded.'

To this Saurin replied in terms which have been often echoed since:

'The establishing an abstract system of Christianity that shall avoid what is peculiar to each sect, and yet preserve what is essential, looks very like making a new religion for the country, and

[1] Private Correspondence, edited by J. S. Parker, vol. i. p. 87.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 90.

establishing by law a precedent for a schism by consent from all churches and sects.'

In the Kildare Place system, which on the one hand enforced the reading of Holy Scripture, and on the other prohibited any note or comment, Peel believed that he had found what he wanted. The legislation which he had contemplated was indefinitely postponed, and Parliamentary grants to the Society began. As has been explained,[1] the system met with criticism from the outset. There were those who like Saurin complained that it gave too little. There were others who in its rule as to the reading of Holy Scripture found more than they could accept. Thus as far back as 1815 an instance occurred of a school of one hundred girls being reduced to thirty owing to the enforcement of the rule.[2] In the main, however, public opinion set strongly in favour of undenominationalism in the school. No one maintained that such a system was ideal. The hope was that it might prove a practicable means of dealing with the prevailing differences. This was the view which the Education Society took from the first, and to which they always, not only conscientiously but enthusiastically, adhered.

It was, however, one thing to agree as to principle,

[1] See above, p. 70.

[2] At Mallow; cf. Letter dated Jan. 1816, from Rev. A. Newman.

quite another to frame working rules for its equitable application. In this task many difficulties were experienced, and the Society were never allowed to feel that their solutions were satisfactory. They were continually beset alike by questions as to how to carry out the system, and by criticisms as to its unfavourable results. Even to their friends the Bible without note or comment proved a constant source of embarrassment.

For many reasons the school at Mountrath was considered an extremely favourable illustration of Kildare Place methods. This is the way in which its religious instruction struck a visitor:

'It is a melancholy thing to see boys chattering over the Sacred Word of God without understanding one sentence of what they read.'

Similar reports came in from the Society's inspectors:

'The Scriptures are greatly garbled in reading,' was the verdict from a western school.

Inspector M. Daly in his evidence before the Commission gave it as his general opinion that the pupils did not derive any intelligent information from their Bible reading.[1]

In order to obviate so serious a defect, permission was given for grammatical and some verbal explanation. Nothing bordering upon doctrine was to be approached, but words free from this suspicion might be eluci-

[1] Appendix to First Report, p. 553. For the *necessity* of questioning on the subject matter see chapter on Publications, pp. 222-224.

dated. On this principle 'wilderness' lay open for comment; 'hypocrite' must remain untouched.

The perplexities which arose in connexion with this relaxation may be illustrated by two extracts from letters received by the Society, and also by means of a circumstance in connexion with the Society's own Model Schools. The length of the extracts and the fulness of detail will perhaps be pardoned in consideration of the evidence so supplied as to the inherent difficulties with which the system was felt to be accompanied.

Extract from letter of Rev. JAMES CARLILE, dated Feb. 24, 1823.

You will be so good as to say what you include in these words, 'note or comment.' The whole of the misunderstanding arose from your inspector insisting on what I could not but regard as an overstrained meaning put upon them. He says you understand them to include the explanation of such words as are unintelligible to the children. That questions might be asked respecting the grammatical connexion of the words, but not the meaning of them. Now, such an explanation of note and comment would appear to me to bear as directly upon translating the Scriptures into a known language as upon human commentaries. And the Society might as well insist on their being read to the children in Latin. Of what use could it possibly be for children to read of tabernacles, temples, porches, arks, or of prophets, apostles, disciples, gospels, miracles, centurions, and a multitude of other words which are perpetually occurring in the sacred volume, and which,

unless they be explained to children, must prevent them from receiving any ideas from what they read. By notes and comments I should understand chiefly, at least, doctrinal or practical inferences drawn from the Scripture which it may be very proper to discountenance, but not the mere translating of a difficult, perhaps a Greek or Latin, word into one more easily understand. Critical scholia have always been considered as different from commentaries. The one belongs to the *mere grammarian*, the other to *the theologian*. I put it to the candour of the Committee how they would feel if, on any of the children being asked who were to be judged at the day of judgment, the child should answer 'sheep and goats,' because the teacher had been prohibited by the rules of the Society to explain these figurative expressions. In Mrs. Carlile's class one of the children in reading the parable of the prodigal son confounded the word *riotous* with *righteous*, would she be in the way of her duty to bind herself not to explain the difference? I know there are difficulties, and much must be left to the good sense and integrity of those who adopt the rules of the Society; but I conceive that no Christian man or woman could withhold an explanation in such circumstances, and that no society of Christians should, for any cause seek to bind them to do so.

Extracts from letter of Rev. J. Stopford, dated May 15, 1824.

On a former occasion I addressed you on the subject of *teaching the grammatical sense*, I then met with so cordial a reply that I am inclined now to resume the subject. It appears to me that some well matured instructions should be made out for the masters of the schools shewing them

what the Society permit and wish for while they prohibit note and comment—well matured and very accurately stated they should be lest (as may be apprehended) this permission should break in on the forbidden ground, the distinction indeed should be as broadly described as possible, the wording of the instructions also to be not in the language of 'grammatical import,' etc., etc., but in a more simple phrase intelligible to masters and parents.

The directions perhaps may run in words such as these: 'The schoolmaster may put questions on the verses of Scripture if he keeps to the very words themselves and does not attempt anything in the way of explanation; he may split a sentence into parts and put questions such as shall cause the scholar to join the parts together and exercise his understanding as to the connexion of the words.' For instance, 'and seeing the multitudes He went up into a mountain.' What did He see? Where did He go?

Such mode of questioning would not, I am sure, alarm any if clearly defined, and on the other hand could not be despised as a mere play upon words—it is deeper than *mere words*—bringing the mind to the relation between the *agent* and the *action*, and between both and a *circumstance*. We may say to those who wish for explanation—let a child's understanding be thus brought within the words to the sense, and then leave it to the Spirit of God to teach and impress the spiritual meaning with light and power.

It will require some attention to teach some of the masters to be thus *simple*. I have in my intercourse with them sometimes read an easy verse and desired them to put a question out of it—frequently the one that first occurred to them was rather a difficult enquiry with the explanation and meaning.

Report of Model School Sub-Committee on the state of the Model Schools.

There is one point of much delicacy and difficulty upon which Mr. Mills has specially remarked, and which, therefore, your Sub-Committee cannot with propriety pass by; namely, his report 'that the teacher questions the scholars in the Scriptures upon points of doctrine in a manner contrary to the "rules of the Society."' Upon such a subject it is almost impossible to draw a line by which the practice is to be regulated; and your Sub-Committee are of opinion that Mr. Irvine's attention should be directed to the expressions of the circular letter with which his explanation of the Scriptures ought to conform. The instance of explanation addressed by Mr. Mills towards the conclusion of his Report, your Sub-Committee are obliged to consider as somewhat passing beyond the limits prescribed in the circular; but they are fully convinced of Mr. Irvine's zeal and prudence, and that it will be sufficient to have noticed this in order to secure a due course of instruction and explanation of Scripture in accordance with the principles of the Society.

From the above evidence it will be clear that even where a desire existed to abide loyally by the principle, most serious difficulty was experienced in its application. In the cases where the rule was resented, the difficulties became practically insuperable. The result was that the Committee fell back, as a choice of evils, upon an unqualified direction to abstain from any note or comment whatsoever; and in their evidence before the Commission, the

leading members gave it as their opinion that this was the only course open. They did not go so far as to prohibit absolutely a mere grammatical explanation, but they discouraged even this. Everything tended to show that once explanation was permitted there was no possibility of ensuring that it should be doctrinally colourless.

Thus it came to pass that the religious teaching of the Society, at best, consisted of the reading of Holy Scripture, without any guarantee that the passage read was understood. The Society did not claim more than this for their system. At the time there were strange views prevalent among the ignorant as to what the Bible was. Witnesses in Court had often no knowledge of its sanctity for the purpose of an oath. A common view was that it was written by Luther for Protestants. One of the witnesses at the Commission declared that there were those who believed, or who said they believed it was written by the devil. It was hoped by the Society that the reverent reading of the Bible in the school as the Word of God would quickly put an end to such painful errors as these; and a further hope was entertained that, even though the Book was little understood at school, it might, at least, come to be so viewed as to lead to its being consulted for counsel and comfort in after life.

Whether such a system could lead to such a result may fairly be left an open question. From the

nature of the case there is but little evidence to consult upon the point. Where evidence is available it rather tends to show that even the elementary knowledge, upon which the aspiration depended, was not always secured.

'Do you find through the country a prevailing ignorance of both versions of the Scriptures?'

'Yes,' replied Matthew Donelan, to whom the question was addressed by the Commissioner, 'the most lamentable instances in our own schools. I have had the precaution to ask some of the boys what the Testament was, after they had been reading it for some time, and they could not tell me; but, I must add, that has been of rare occurrence.'

'Do you conceive that to be the result of no explanation being given?'

'I cannot say that positively, although I conceive it probable.'

'Do they not know it is the Word of God?'

'No, they could not tell that, even when I put the answer in their mouths; and if the children of our schools are so ignorant with such advantages, I conclude their parents must be more so.'

'Do you think the peasantry would in most instances distinguish between a Testament and any other book of the same size upon a religious subject put into their hands?'

'Upon my word I think they could scarcely do it, except where the exertions of the Bible Society have

succeeded; but in many parts of Connaught the peasant does not know what a Bible or a Testament is.'[1]

It is not surprising that the Commissioners, after weighing such evidence as this, found themselves unable to extend to the working of the religious principles of the Society the commendation they had bestowed so freely upon everything else they did.

'Upon the whole, it appears to us that while the Society have succeeded beyond their own most sanguine expectation in some of their objects, they have failed in others. They have certainly failed in producing universal satisfaction; and . . . the three points which they distinguish from all others as being fundamental and indispensable are those in which their failure, to a certain extent, cannot be denied. The compliance with these three fundamental rules, we are convinced, is in many cases merely nominal: the use of the Scriptures is frequently a matter of form; catechisms are taught as freely in many of their schools as in any others, merely by the fiction of treating the appointed times as not being school hours; and the selections of masters and mistresses, though nominally uninfluenced by religious considerations, are truly and practically confined to Roman Catholics, where the patrons are the Roman Catholic clergy, and to Protestants where the schools are in

[1] Appendix to First Report, pp. 488, 489.

connexion with the Association for Discountenancing Vice, or the patrons are clergymen of the Established Church.

'While they have abstained, as a matter of necessity, from giving particular instruction in religion, they have rested upon a compromise, the terms of which they have never been able perfectly to realise, and which, even if realised, no person is of opinion would have been completely satisfactory.' [1]

In view of the evidence no other conclusion could be reached. The attempt at undenominational teaching, the system of the Bible without note or comment had broken down. The Roman Catholics, when they controlled the schools, either reduced the reading of the Scriptures to a nullity or suspended it altogether; where this was impossible, because others were in power, they broke into indignant and unveiled opposition. The Protestants of all denominations, when the schools were in their own hands, dismissed those who differed, and taught their catechisms to the rest; when others exercised control they complained bitterly of their disabilities.

'Nor can I say that they are getting a Scriptural education while the Bible is merely tolerated,' wrote a clergyman whose schools had been handed over to the Society; and again, 'If I had the means of breaking the connexion I would do so to-morrow, for it is a weighty matter on my conscience having

[1] First Report, p. 58.

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the children entrusted to my care so imperfectly educated.'[1]

Plainly, where opinions such as these prevailed, the system so condemned showed little probability of ever winning general acceptance. More hopeless still was the pronounced impossibility of attaining to satisfactory results, even under the most favourable circumstances. If there was one place more than another where the system might have been expected to work well, it was in the Model Schools of the Society. Their general excellence was patent, their strict impartiality was never impeached, yet here is what their Superintendent, J. Veevers, had to say of the effect of the system upon pupils to whom, in connexion with ordinary literature, he ascribed in the same evidence 'a taste for reading.'

'Are the Scriptures in any manner explained to the children in the school?'

'Never.'

'If, in the reading of the New Testament, you had any reason to doubt the child did not understand the meaning of the commonest word he read, should you feel yourself at liberty, according to the rules of the school, to ask him whether he understood that word?'

'Of a word, we should give the grammatical explanation, and, when a word has been mispronounced, we have corrected the child; but there

[1] Rev. E. Hardman, August, 1827.

has been no explanation as to the meaning of the words.'

'Is it the custom, when the children are reading other works than the Scriptures, to question them in the meaning of the words and explain them to them?'

'It is.'

'Is the difference you pursue in regard to the Scriptures with a view to avoid the possibility of giving anything like controversial interpretations upon the meaning of particular passages?'

'Yes.'

'Is it your opinion that the more advanced boys in the school understand tolerably the meaning of the New Testament in reading it?'

'I am of opinion that they do not.'

'The question does not refer, of course, merely to the doctrinal parts of the New Testament; but do you conceive that they understand the ordinary parts of the New Testament?'

'I think they do not.'

'Do they manifest any curiosity upon the subject, any wish to be better informed about it?'

'I do not recollect an instance of it.'

The Commissioners reported in favour of the abolition of undenominationalism. They considered that the 'chief defect' of the Kildare Place system was the absence of provision for giving definite

denominational teaching in the schools, and they proposed a plan to remedy the defect. Upon two days each week each denomination was to be separately taken by its teachers. Catechisms were to be taught. The clergy or their representatives were to have access to the school. In addition to the religious instruction so given, a book of Scripture extracts was to be prepared, and its use was to be compulsory for all during the time of united instruction.

In themselves, these recommendations, and the details with which they were accompanied, possess no special importance. When promulgated they met with little approval. An attempt to carry them into limited operation broke down in the initial stages, owing to the difficulties experienced in connexion with producing a satisfactory book of Scripture extracts. Their importance for our purpose consists in the condemnation pronounced upon Kildare Place. For reasons given in the preceding chapter, the Society declined to accept the Report as final, and continued for a number of years to prosecute their own policy with a tenacity worthy of all praise, and a success which was truly remarkable. But from the date of the Report the Parliamentary position was radically changed. The Kildare Place system of refusing to recognise religious differences in public schools, was, once for all, set on one side so far as Parliamentary approval

was concerned. Henceforth it was only a question of time till a system should be developed in Ireland which would give to each denomination absolute freedom to impart, either by the clergy or the teacher, the religious instruction of which the parents of the pupils approved.

Some of the stages, whereby this end has been reached, fall within our limits, and must be briefly sketched.

Upon the occasion of the first vote for the Society, after the presentation of the Report of the Commission, Mr. Spring Rice, an Irish member, whose opposition has already been noticed, and who was destined to play an important part in the shaping of the educational future of the country, resisted the grant on the ground that the Society's fundamental principles had been condemned by the Commissioners. The debate which ensued was the first of a series which took place whenever the question of pecuniary aid came forward. Another excuse for discussion was found in the numerous petitions, some for, more against the Society, which were annually presented. In the course of these debates the Society had no reason to complain of the treatment they received. If extreme statements were made they were quickly answered. The high character of its members was not impugned. Even opponents were ready to recognise the good which had been done. No one bore stronger testimony to

the excellence of the Kildare Place work than Mr. Frankland Lewis, the Chairman of the Commission of Inquiry. The one argument to which no answer could be given was that so long as the Society insisted upon the compulsory reading of Holy Scripture, its acceptance by the Roman Catholics was not to be expected. In reply the Government made no attempt to dispute this position. Had there been no O'Connell, and no agitation, it is perhaps conceivable that Kildare Place principles might have prevailed. Now that Ireland was aflame, and within measurable distance of civil war, it was futile to cry peace in connexion with the organisation, whose rules had been so sedulously used for kindling the conflagration. All that Peel, now Home Secretary, and Chief Secretary Goulburn, could do, was to rebut charges which had no foundation, such as that of proselytism, to point to the valuable services rendered to the State, and to take their stand upon the futility of destroying a system, which was by common consent allowed to be good in many of its aspects, before it was made plain that they had anything better to put in its place.

At last in March, 1828, the knot was cut by Mr. Spring Rice. Recognising that all the facts necessary for the solution of the situation were at hand, in the voluminous Reports of previous Commissions, he moved for a select committee to collate these reports, and to draw up a working scheme. No opposition

was offered to the proposal, and a Committee of 21 was appointed.

The Report of this Committee, which was ready early in 1829, had a marked effect upon Parliamentary opinion. It endorsed the principle of united education to which the Kildare Place Society attached so much importance, and which had met with the approval of the Commission of Inquiry. But the united education was to be wholly secular. The Committee kept clear of the attempt to agree upon a religious residuum, which had proved fatal to the scheme of the Commission. They went even further. The Commissioners had arranged for teachers of the same denomination as the pupils, and thus had enjoined distinctive religious teaching. The Committee fell back upon the Kildare Place principle of choosing teachers without reference to their religious opinions. They did indeed recognise, as the Kildare Place Society had done, that distinctive religious teaching was desirable. As, however, teachers so chosen could not be entrusted with the work, they contented themselves with providing 'facilities' for enabling the clergy to undertake the charge; and with introducing a regulation, which reads curiously now, to the effect that scholars were to attend their places of worship on Sundays, and that the certificates of their having done so were to be entered in the school register.

The report so framed was not long in receiving a remarkable endorsement. Hitherto the Roman Catholics had bent their energies towards obtaining for themselves separate education funds. They now recognised that on this point opinion was hopelessly against them, and a petition in favour of the recommendation of the Select Committee was presented to both Houses of Parliament.

At this period political events were moving with rapidity. Convinced that nothing but harm could result from further resistance, Wellington and Peel yielded, and Emancipation was carried. Some hope was expressed, on the part of the friends of Kildare Place, that this great clearing of the political arena might at last obtain for the Society impartial judgment upon the merits of the case. But the support which they had so long received from a government that had determinedly resisted Roman Catholic aspirations did more even than their own rules to ensure disaster. The triumph of Emancipation served only to intensify the determination to be rid of everything which was in any way identified with the policy of the past. From all parts of the country an unceasing array of petitions kept pouring in, and the arrival of O'Connell in the House added new vehemence to the Parliamentary attacks. While the Wellington ministry lasted nothing was done. But when Earl Grey succeeded in 1830, it was plain to all that the withdrawal of the Kildare Place grants

was imminent, and could only be averted by a radical change of policy.

In this emergency, which was to prove the crisis in the affairs of the Society, there were those who counselled a reconsideration of the constitution. Among them was the Marquis of Downshire, President of the Society, whose interest in educational matters had been practical and unfailing, and whose many schools had been among the most successful exponents of Kildare Place methods.

Whatever opinion may have been formed as to the value of the Kildare Place principles in themselves, few will withold their admiration from the consistent firmness with which all such suggestions were rejected. Once before, when the Commission had pronounced against the compulsory reading of Scripture and the absence of denominational teaching, there had been those who advised modification. The only result was to throw the determination of the Committee into stronger relief. The maxim, 'CLING TO YOUR PRINCIPLES,' appeared in bold capitals in the next report. At that time there was still ground for hoping that firmness might lead to victory. Peel had written to one of the Commissioners of Inquiry in 1824: 'I sincerely hope the Commissioners will not be induced by any consideration to give up the use of the Scriptures on the five days.'[1] With such an opinion in support of the characteristic feature

[1] Private Correspondence, vol. i. p. 344.

of their policy, who had the right to tell the Society that the cause was lost?

Matters were very different in 1830. The force of the agitation had taught Peel many things. Peel was succeeded by ministers who were quite prepared to turn their backs upon anything for which he was responsible. There was therefore no alternative before the Society but one; they must either forsake their grants or their principles. Undaunted by the prospect, they remained immovable. If perish they must, they would at least be true to the cause for which they had lived. They would go down with their colours flying.

The last scene was not long delayed. Attack after attack was made in the session of 1831. At last in September,[1] the Hon. E. G. Stanley definitely announced that it was the intention of the Government to withdraw the grants, and so put an end to the Society as a means for State Education. The plan he proposed in its stead was one of combined literary and separate religious instruction, which would follow the lines recommended by Mr. Spring Rice's Committee. From Kildare Place he proposed to adopt the system which had worked so well in their excellent Model Schools, and their method of sending out Cheap Books. In his speech, the Chief Secretary paid a handsome tribute to the Society. If Kildare Place had failed, the blame should be laid

[1] *Hansard*, 3rd Series, vol. vi. p. 1249.

on the Government which had endorsed and approved their principles, rather than on the Committee. The charge of proselytism he rejected as strongly as Peel had done. For the educational work which had been achieved he gave generous credit. Their great defect was the rule as to the reading of Holy Scripture: it did not secure a really religious education, and it prevented the adoption of the system by the Roman Catholics.

Similar testimony was borne in these closing scenes by many who had been prominent, for political and other reasons, in working for the Society's downfall. Stanley himself quoted the evidence given in 1830 before a Select Committee on the State of the Poor in Ireland by Dr. Doyle.[1] In somewhat similar tones, even O'Connell did not hesitate to acknowledge the good done by the Society in regions where the Roman Catholic question did not arise.[2] Mr. Frankland Lewis praised highly the training of teachers, and he informed the House that such was the excellence of the school books that they had been reprinted for use in America.[3] Mr. Spring Rice went as far as to approve of the system of the Society as it stood—if only it could be acted on. As the result of the debates, the celebrated letter by which the present National Board

[1] See above, ch. vi. p. 115.

[2] *Hansard*, 3rd Series, vol. iii. p. 402.

[3] *Hansard*, 3rd Series, vol. vi. p. 1266.

was constituted was written in October, and the Parliamentary grants to the Society for the Education of the Poor of Ireland ceased.

With the withdrawal of the Government assistance closed the period to which this book is confined. Much remains to be written about the educational work which has ever since, under differing auspices, been carried on at Kildare Place. The history of the National Board in popular form is still untold. The omission is the more remarkable in view of English difficulties in connexion with religion and the school. At its inception the National Board was colourless in the extreme. Its denominationalism is now pronounced. The successive modifications which have brought about a change so satisfactory to the nation as a whole are of interest and importance.

All such matters however stand outside the scope of a book devoted to the State-aided education of the Kildare Place Society. Political and religious causes long denied to the Society and their members the meed of honour which is their due. Now that, with the help of the original documents, the work they did for the advance of education has been separated from the scenes of turmoil and opposition in which it was accomplished, it ought to be possible for all to give them a well-earned place among the foremost philanthropists and educationists of their time.

PART II. METHODS.

CHAPTER I.

THE TRAINING OF TEACHERS.

In the following characteristic letter, Joseph Lancaster introduced to Mr. Bewley a 'young man' who was destined to serve the Education Society with pre-eminent success, both as chief trainer of their teachers, and also as chief organiser of all their scholastic work.

Birmingham, 9 of 11 mo., 1812.

My Dear Friend,

I have at last a young man in view for you, one whom success will attend, who has been tried and proved for ten years, and who has the root of the matter in the very grain and soul of him.

He is unwilling to continue in Dublin more than six months; but he will gladly traverse all Ireland in establishing and organising schools, in which work he has been thoroughly tried, and for which I can give him the most unqualified recommendation—to which I may add that he is the senior officer or Field Marshal among all my young Generals who

have been my armour-bearers and aid-du-cons (*sic.*) in the long war I have carried against that ignorance which has so terribly taken captive the flower of our youth and led them as victims to the altar of vice and iniquity.

His services in England are worth £150 per ann., which he can command as long as he likes; he ought not to come to Ireland without £200 per ann., and his travelling expenses. He is not only fitted to organise schools, but *to train schoolmasters*, which he has already done in a way equal to my highest expectation.

He is about 23 years, of a mild disposition and an accomplished mind, very superior to any young man now engaged in the place. He is, in fact, the only person I can procure, the only one qualified, and his loss will be greatly felt in his removal from his present establishment.

He is now at the head of a school of over 400 children and cannot leave his situation under three months' notice. . . He is a member of the Church of England, but no bigot, and indeed no man can be found more suitable. . . .

I rejoice in being able to communicate this information. I joy for Ireland and for the friends of it. You will have in him a practical Joseph Lancaster, who will carry on the work in glory. . . .

I rejoice with joy indescribable at the prospect of being able to recommend so efficient and trusty a labourer for the good cause of universal instruction without intolerance.

I remain, with my respects to the Gentlemen of the Committee, and my best remembrance to all my personal friends, thine affectionately, Jos. Lancaster.

Sam Bewley.

The high praise thus given was endorsed with similar emphasis, though in less grandiloquent

phrases, by W. Allen, one of Lancaster's Committee, whose name and liberality will always be held in honour in connection with the foundation of the British and Foreign School Society. Joseph Fox, Secretary of the Committee, was able to say: 'In introducing Mr. Veevers to his office I am placing my name to a treasure fraught with the most lasting benefits to the population of Ireland.'

In the face of such recommendations, it was not possible to question the excellence of the candidate; but his price was alarming. The whole income of the Society for the first twelve months did not amount to £600. Was it prudent or possible even, to spend upwards of a third upon a single salary? Happily for the cause of education, a courageous policy prevailed, and on Jan. 4, 1813, the 'young man' was appointed. It is perhaps characteristic of the difference between now and then, that it took more than six months before he reached Dublin. A quarter's notice had of course to be given; but after this there were visits to friends; then there were demands of Lancaster's for personal help in a time of domestic trials; finally there was the journey, no light matter before the days of rail or steam. Meanwhile the Committee in Dublin became impatient, and addressed remonstrances to Lancaster. They had been quite willing to wait as originally arranged, until the beginning of May; they were not prepared to find not only May

but June over, and still no young man! At last, on July 10, the young man came in the person of Mr. John Veevers.

The letter of introduction which he brought with him deserves quotation, not alone on account of what it says about himself, but because of the generous testimony it bears to S. Bewley's zeal and kindness.

SALVADOR HOUSE,
TOOTING, SURREY, 6th mo. 22nd, 1813.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I have often said that the person I sent to Ireland should be one of the most accomplished persons I am connected with in propagating my system. I send them the representative of myself, and I hope my Irish friends will feel gratified in accepting at my hand the first fruit of my system in England as exemplified in the bearer for ten years.

I recommend him as my kind and affectionate friend to thee whose kindness and sympathy I have so much rejoiced in when my spirit almost sunk under the double load I had to sustain in Ireland; not doubting, but that thou wilt have a portion of the same for him from the same inexhaustible fountain.

Recommending him as a friend and brother to thy kind care. I remain, thy affectionate friend,

JOS. LANCASTER.

Before attempting to glance back across the seventy years of oblivion, and to see once more the work which Veevers accomplished for the Education Society, it will be well to review the

circumstances which led to an appointment such as his being made.

At the beginning of the twentieth century we are confronted by educational problems, which differ only in degree from those which had to be faced at the beginning of the nineteenth. Now, it is the secondary schools which need reorganisation. Old methods are discredited, new demands are making themselves imperatively heard, the dislocated condition of our present system is arresting universal attention. Educational reformers, Parliament, the nation in general—all are at work, seeking to find, for the solution of the difficulties, a large and comprehensive system, properly adjusted, suitably controlled. Among the truths which are at last finding sluggish recognition at the hands of the powers who sit enthroned in educational high places, none is more important than the necessity for the training of teachers. It is to the credit of the pioneers in primary education that they lost no time in perceiving a need, which even still is often overlooked in connection with secondary work. The Kildare Place Society placed the training of teachers in the forefront of their plans.

Among the original resolutions upon which the Society was based, the following occurs as the fifth.

'That the Society shall receive communications and maintain correspondence upon all subjects which shall tend to further the objects of its formation, give

information and assistance to local associations for the fitting up of schoolhouses upon a suitable plan, and *facilitate the providing of teachers properly qualified.*'

By the time the first Report of the Society was published, May 10, 1813, the desire to 'facilitate the providing of teachers' had taken shape in a proposal to establish a school in Dublin 'to which the Society might point as a model for the mode of instruction recommended by them, and where lads might be trained to act as schoolmasters.'[1]

Until such time as the Society could have a school of their own, the school in School Street, concerning which some account has been given in Part I., Chap. i., promised to afford a suitable field for the work of training. The School Street Committee were willing to co-operate in every possible way; and no difficulty was found in arranging for the transfer of one of their departments to the management of the Education Society.

Thus it happened that all was ready for Veevers when he arrived. He stepped at once into a school with an attendance of two hundred and fifty boys, and from the first he was placed in supreme control. What the Committee wanted was a 'Model School.' By this they meant a school to which teachers from all parts of Ireland might come, and whose excellence might serve as a model, to inspire and direct them, when they went back to schools of their own. With

[1] First Report, p. 6.

a wisdom, which must have been in the highest degree encouraging, they decided not to interfere in any way with the development of the methods which their new officer brought with him. Their plan was to allow Veevers full powers for the production of the best results which Lancaster's system could give. They meanwhile, by means of a Sub-Committee appointed for the purpose, would watch the experiment; they would note where Veevers' methods agreed with, where they differed from those already in use at School Street. By an eclectic process they would then combine the best which the two systems offered. In this way they hoped to attain to a school which would be 'Model' in the full sense of the word.

It is not without significance that the institution, planned in the beginning of the nineteenth century for the training of teachers, was a *School*, as distinct from the *Colleges* which are now entrusted with the work. In these days the proficiency of teachers is tested by elaborate examinations. In order to afford opportunity for the necessary preparation, the training period has been lengthened to two, and sometimes to three years. On the Continent even longer courses are found. The Colleges are great teaching as well as training organisations. What the Education Society desired was to impart skill in the art of teaching. Their aim was to seek out young men, and, later, young women, who already possessed know-

ledge sufficient for the requirements of the time, and to give them the skill necessary for imparting their knowledge in the best way. For this purpose they believed that the fittest instrument would be a school —a Model School, where the best possible methods of teaching and organisation would be exhibited, and where the teachers in training would be helped by practice and criticism to acquire proficiency themselves.

It is necessary to bear in mind this distinction between a Training School, and Training Colleges. Otherwise we should be unable to appreciate the training work which the Society accomplished. The Colleges of to-day undertake a two-fold work. They teach, and they teach how to teach. A cursory inspection of time tables will show that in most Colleges the ordinary work of teaching occupies the greater part of the available time. It is at least doubtful whether the duties connected with imparting the art of teaching receive more attention, or are discharged with more intelligence than in the Training School, which the Kildare Place Society were destined to found. Certain it is that at the time there was nothing which could equal, or even approach the standard that the Society reached; under the management of Veevers the school realised their highest aspirations, and became a model, not for Ireland only, but for the world.[1]

[1] Cf. Letter of Count de Lasteyrie, quoted p. 305.

At School Street all went well from the first. It was soon manifest to the Committee that they had secured an official upon whose talents and good sense they might rely. It took but a few months to bring the school up to the level required for a training school, and by the beginning of 1814 the Society were able to advertise in 'sixteen of the most respectable provincial prints' inviting young men to attend, with the object of being trained to act as schoolmasters. It was a disappointment that no further inducements could be held out. Already the Committee were looking forward to being able to bring the candidates free of cost to Dublin, to support them while being trained, and to send them back with all expenses paid. But at the start all they could offer was 'free instruction.' Parliamentary aid had not yet been proposed, and private contributions were restricted and uncertain. Notwithstanding these disabilities, candidates were at once forthcoming, and on Feb. 2, 1814, the work of training commenced.

It will perhaps be pardonable to linger a moment or two over the earliest entries in the register of what is now the Church of Ireland Training College. Of all the Colleges in the three kingdoms only one can claim so venerable a foundation date.[1] No similar Training College has been so long associated with

[1] The British and Foreign Society was founded the year before the Education Society. Its Training College has a history longer than any other.

a single site as the college in Kildare Place.[1] An interest all its own attaches to it, in that from the first it was an undertaking of national importance, and as such received large grants from Parliament.

The first name upon the register is James Maze. He must have been in earnest about his work, for he made his way to Dublin from the north of the County Armagh. He had been teaching since 1811, and he was now 26 years of age. The school for which he was trained was in Lurgan. It contained 160 boys. Maze was its first teacher. Maze is entered as a 'Protestant.' The second name is that of a Roman Catholic—Daniel Horan. He had been teaching since 1779, and was now 36 years of age. He was recommended for training by the governors of the Charity School in Francis St., Dublin. The next entry was for a school in the north, in Co. Down; the next for the west, in Co. Clare; the next for the midlands, in Co. Cavan. The sixth was for the south-east, in Wexford; the seventh for the north-west, in Donegal; Limerick, in the south, sent the eighth. The religions were equally balanced, half being 'Protestants' half 'Catholics.' It would be difficult to imagine a more promising opening. It was manifest that the whole country was astir with the desire for better methods of education. It was plain that the Education Society and their proposals

[1] The College of the British and Foreign Society has been moved from the Borough Road to Isleworth.

commanded confidence among all sections of the community.

For the next five years the work of training was carried on at School Street with increasing success. At first the impossibility of giving help towards expenses kept the numbers low. But, as their income improved, the Society were gradually able to do more. Their first advance was to make grants of five guineas each[1] to candidates who were suitably recommended, and who were to be trained for schools conducted in accordance with the principles of the Society. They next took the more important step of hiring a house.[2] There they placed the teachers under the superintendence of Veevers, and arranged with a matron for their maintenance.[3] For their leisure hours they provided them with instructive and interesting books.

The methods employed in the work of training will be discussed presently, when 'the Seminary,' as as it was called at this period, has been transferred to Kildare Place. Here all that is needed is a brief outline of the circumstances under which the work was done, together with a review of the results of the first five years' training.[4]

[1] Report v. p. 22.

[2] No. 18 New Street.

[3] The sum allowed was 10s. per week, which, however, was supplemented on its being found insufficient. Cf. Report of Model School Sub-Committee, Jan., 1808.

[4] Report vii. p. 21.

The number of teachers received into training in School Street was 138. Of these a large proportion came from, and returned to schools which were not in any way connected with the Society. In such cases it was not thought right to incur any pecuniary expense. But the instruction given in the Model School was freely placed at the disposal of all who genuinely purposed to pursue the work of teaching.

The number in attendance at any one time was about 14.[1] The comparison of an average of 14 with a total of 138, in something under five years, at once calls attention to a characteristic feature of the training. Under present day conditions, when the course lasts two years, an average of 14 would mean that only about 7 entered each year. Now all who enter come into residence at the same time; they are trained side by side; all go away together. Under the Education Society it was a rare thing in the School Street period for more than one teacher to enter upon any given day. Even at Kildare Place, where the number in training was, as a rule, as high as 50, and where it occasionally rose to 70, not many entered together. This no doubt arose partly from the slowness of communication and the difficulties of travel. There were no express trains for the annihilation of space and the accurate regulation of time. But the system introduced at School Street, and continued at Kildare Place, was chiefly re-

[1] Report of Model School Committee, July, 1817.

sponsible. What Veevers aimed at was to send out teachers who were proficient in the new method. For this he considered that about six weeks ought to suffice. If, as was sometimes the case, a teacher showed special aptitude, he was sent out as trained in even a shorter period. If he was slow he was kept on and on until weeks stretched into months. The limit was about four months. If within this period the method had not been acquired, further effort was looked upon as hopeless, and the teacher was dismissed. Certificates of different grades were awarded to the successful; in the other cases they were withheld. When the close of the courses was thus undefined, it followed that the beginning must be equally uncertain. Those who had been accepted were called up as vacancies occurred. It was seldom possible to foredate the vacancies accurately.

The remarks, made in detail, with reference to the religion, and the localities, of the first eight teachers who came, may be applied generally to the whole 138 who were trained at School Street. Protestants and Roman Catholics came in nearly equal numbers. Few counties were left unrepresented. In age the teachers ranged from as young as sixteen, to as old as fifty-five. Some had been teaching as far back as 1798. Many went to their work for the first time after training. Of the schools they represented, several dated from the eighteenth century, one, the

'Patrician School,' Drogheda, went back to 1773. The majority, however, were founded from 1811 onwards. They were proofs of the stimulus to education which the Society had given. In not a few cases the training of the master synchronised with the foundation of the school. A common order of procedure was: (1) Build a school; (2) appoint a master; (3) send him to be trained.

Some attempt will be made later to estimate the value to Ireland of the Society's training work. Here it will suffice to quote one or two pieces of evidence bearing on the period we are considering.

The Lancasterian School, Limerick, was one of the most important for which the Society trained. The following testimony from a member of its Committee has been preserved in one of the early reports:[1] 'We have been happy in the choice of a master, as well as in the situation of our school; he far exceeds our expectations in performing the duties of his station, and his diffidence and modesty are not the least of his merits. He was well instructed at the National Institution (*i.e.* the School Street Seminary), and what he learned there made a deep impression on his mind. It seems to be his greatest delight to attend to his employment in the school, and if he could find room for double the number[2] I believe he would gladly

[1] Report iii., Appendix vii. p. 53.

[2] There were about 450 in average attendance at the time. *Ibid.*, p. 54.

receive them. On the day called St. Stephen's day, he assembled the boys of his own accord, saying that he did not think himself or the boys could employ the day better, after going to Chapel in the morning. Considering that this system was a novelty to the master, that the monitors were wholly ignorant of it, and that the school filled so rapidly with a parcel of raw boys, it is wonderful how well organised they appear to be in so short a time. It surprises everyone who sees it.'

It would be possible to multiply evidence of this kind, and to mention various localities where the training work of the Society was highly valued by those to whom the teachers were sent. But our purpose will be better served by referring to evidence of a more inclusive kind. In chapter iv. some account will be given of the valuable reports in which Veevers records the result of his first tour of inspection. These reports contain definite information as to the work done by teachers trained by the Society, and are the more authoritative on account of the manifestly impartial spirit in which they are drawn. They refer to the School Street period, and sum up its results.

In the report of the tour in the north, made in 1818, Veevers does not hesitate to say that one half of the teachers trained at School Street, whom he saw at work, do not appear to have benefited by their visit to Dublin. For this he assigns various reasons,

such as the inability of the master, the impossibility of obtaining the necessary requisites, the absence of local support, the presence of jealousy or opposition. He does not consider that the kind of training received is to blame. On the contrary, where local co-operation was at hand, and the needed financial aid was forthcoming, the schools were good. 'I beg leave,' he says, in conclusion, 'to express the satisfaction I experienced at the superior appearance of several of those schools, conducted by masters, assisted by the Society.'

The report for next year, 1819, is much more hopeful in character. It deals with the provinces of Leinster and Munster. Among the schools he visited he found 25 in charge of teachers trained by the Society, and he is able to speak well of all. Furthermore, their schools contrast favourably with all others. 'Most of the schools,' he says, 'conducted by teachers who have been trained in the Model School of the Society, are evidently superior to the neighbouring seminaries where masters have not had this advantage.'

The transfer of the teachers in training from the house in New Street and the Seminary in School Street to the Model School in Kildare Place was effected in the first days of the year 1819. The Committee felt deeply the responsibility of the step they were taking. Hitherto they had been instructors only. Their grants in aid, and their provision

for board and lodging in New Street, had merely been helps to young men, who came, upon their own responsibility and that of their parents, to obtain the teaching qualifications which the Society offered.

All this was now altered. When they invited the teachers to take up their residence in a house which was not only their property, but which formed an integral portion of their Model Schools, the Committee realised that they had no option but to stand *in loco parentis* to those thus confided to their care. For such a course there was a precedent in the work done by the British and Foreign Society, in their Borough Road Training School. The London experiment had proved a success, and it gave the Education Society courage to proceed. They never had reason to do otherwise than congratulate themselves on their decision. Under the firm and steadfast guidance of Superintendent Veevers, as he was now called, the Training School entered upon a period of prosperity which won universal commendation. Among the many charges which were brought against the Society, owing to the circumstances of the time, it does not appear that their training methods were ever called in question.

The authorities at our disposal for describing the training of teachers at Kildare Place consist of the minutes of the Society, which are complete, and the quarterly reports of the Model School Committee, which have not many gaps during the period in ques-

tion. There are also some occasional documents, and some letters. Finally, there is the Report of the Royal Commission on Education, and its Appendix, with the evidence, which here, as elsewhere, is full of valuable information. As we study this early experiment in the art of training teachers, there are many points of detail upon which fuller information would have been welcome, but quite sufficient has been preserved to enable an accurate picture to be formed.

Let us trace, in imagination, the progress of one of the teachers, from his summons to the conclusion of his training.

Redmond Sheridan lives in a remote village of the County Cork. The neighbouring school is backward; it is kept by an old teacher who has some knowledge, but no method. Notwithstanding this disadvantage, Redmond has managed to lay a good foundation, and he longs for an opportunity of further advance. Quite recently the ownership of the soil has changed hands, and the new landlord has come into residence. Already rumour is busy with the improvements he is planning, and in particular it is said that a new school is to be opened, that it is to be placed in connexion with the great Society in Dublin which has done so much for the improvement of the education of the poor, and that probably a master will be soon appointed and sent to Dublin to prepare for the work.

Earnestly does Redmond long that the patron's choice may fall on him. Great, then, is his joy, when one morning the landlord calls and offers him the school, provided he will go to Dublin to be trained. The condition adds to the attraction of the offer, and Redmond gratefully accepts. Before long, the news comes that the Education Society consider him eligible. As the new school is to be worked in accordance with their rules, they will pay his expenses to and from Dublin, and admit him free of charge. The patron will bear the expense of a suitable outfit. Nothing remains but to receive the summons announcing that a place is vacant in the Training School. It is now September, 1823. Redmond Sheridan is just 19 years old, the age that Mr. Veevers, superintendent of the Model School, thinks best for training. The School will open for the purpose of training in October. As the days go on, young Sheridan looks keenly for the receipt of the required summons ; but the applicants are far more numerous than can be received at once, and they are called in turn. October passes, and November, and already December is half over before the long looked for letter comes, with a summons for the beginning of the New Year. And now the day for leaving has arrived. Good-byes are said, and Redmond Sheridan is off. There is no thought of shrinking back, no swerving from purpose in his heart ; yet it is not possible to avoid some mis-

givings. For one who has never been ten miles from his native village this leap into the unknown seems surrounded with perils. The journey itself is one whose dangers cause many to make their wills before they start. And at the end what kind of welcome will await one who is only a poor country lad—and a Roman Catholic? He has heard that the Society make no distinctions and treat all religions alike; but even if this be true what prospect of toleration can there be for such as he among his fellows, the Orangemen and Presbyterians of the North? The hardships of the wintry journey add to his apprehensions as they increase his miseries. To mistresses the Society allow the protection of inside places; but masters must make the best of outside seats. When at last, late on Saturday evening, he finds himself passing through the great iron gates into the quadrangle of the Model Schools it is only with a strong effort that he braces himself for what he must undergo.

'Dear me, how cold you must be, and no wonder, travelling in such weather,' are the first words he hears. The matron, for it is she who has welcomed him, leads the way to a cheery room where a warm fire and a substantial supper banish hunger and cold.

'Now, will you come and join your companions? You are the last of the five who were to come to-day; the four others are already partly at home.'

They are sitting in a long, rather low basement

room, whose flagged floor would have had a chilling effect were it not for the bright light of the oil gas and the warmth of a large fire. There seem to be nearly fifty in all; a few are talking to the new comers, some are deep in books which they have borrowed from the library; the majority are busy working out problems of school management, or mastering the mysteries of Pestalozzi's system of arithmetic. This is especially the case with those whose training is drawing to a close, and who are anxious to secure the highest possible certificate on leaving. A 'President' selected from the students is in charge, and under him are various student officers. Their duties, however, are scarcely more than nominal. It is at once manifest that the greatest harmony prevails. Sheridan's anxiety as to his reception speedily disappears.[1]

Before long, bed-time comes, and they climb up what seem to Sheridan endless flights of stone steps, until they reach a great dormitory. 'We have only

[1] Cf. the following extract from Mr. Jackson's evidence quoted by the Commissioners of Irish Education Inquiry in their Report, p. 42:

'Individuals of the different persuasions live together like the members of one family. They have no differences between them, and I have often questioned them upon the manner in which they were employed out of school hours, and how they lived together, and I have always been answered by such individuals expressing great satisfaction, and even surprise, that they could live together so happily, differing as they did. I am sure the very best consequences have resulted.'

just been given this dormitory,' says one of his companions; 'up to a few days ago the teachers slept in the basement, close to the room we have come from. It was as good or better than the damp mud floors in our own homes; we scarcely know ourselves in this grand new room.'

Next morning as he finds himself at a comfortable breakfast, Sheridan asks 'what are the rules for to-day?' 'Oh! not many' replies his companion, 'we are expected to go to our places of worship and to be in for meals in the evening.' Sheridan soon finds that the speaker is a Roman Catholic, and they arrange to go to Chapel together. A bond springs up between them, and most of the morning is spent talking about their work and prospects. What chiefly impresses Sheridan is the intense respect entertained for the Superintendent. The personality of Mr. Veevers seems to pervade everyone and everything. Apart from the feelings aroused by his first introduction to the wonders of a great city, nothing during the day interests Sheridan more than the way the evening is spent. Noticing the men gathering after supper, he enquires the reason. The answer 'our Bible Reading,' coupled with an invitation to take part sets him questioning. 'Who instituted the custom?' 'The teachers themselves.' 'From what persuasion did the suggestion come?' 'Originally it was a Presbyterian, I have heard, but the present gathering was suggested by a Roman Catholic.'

'What members of staff are present?' 'There are none.' Thoroughly satisfied, Sheridan gladly joins the circle, and from what he hears he can well understand the hold which the custom has obtained. Different passages are read in turn and discussed. Occasionally the views held by the readers start out prominently, but the fundamental principle which the Superintendent has laid down for their guidance is the avoidance of all acrimonious discussion. Everything which seems likely to lead to unpleasantness or division is quickly ruled out of order, and throughout, the utmost harmony prevails.

With Monday morning, the training begins in earnest. Soon after seven, Sheridan, with his companion of the day before, had sallied out to see some of the places and buildings of which he had read so much. They were back to breakfast at 8.30, and now Sheridan and the junior members of the class are assembled for a lecture on methods of teaching and school management by the Superintendent. A pin might have been heard drop as Mr. Veevers enters, and at once all are intent upon hearing, and making notes of what they hear. The lecture is one of a series which deals in the most practical manner with the details of school work. It is given with the authority of one who has not only mastered, but who also to a large extent originated the subject with which he deals. *Facile princeps* among those who had worked with Lancaster, Veevers has gladly made

use of the opportunities offered by his independent position at Kildare Place, with the result that he has largely extended and improved the Lancasterian system. All that was good in the drill and the discipline has been retained, but the extreme formality has been greatly modified. Much attention is still bestowed upon the elementary subjects to which Lancaster confined himself almost entirely; but the curriculum has been broadened; new subjects have been introduced, and the old, especially arithmetic, are carried further. In the manner of the lecturer there is at first a reserve which almost amounts to coldness. Veevers was sometimes called stern. But as he warms to his subject, the enthusiasm of the man appears, and becomes contagious. Himself a master of detail and arrangement, he succeeds in carrying all with him in the desire to excel in careful accuracy, and in exact organisation. At the close of the lecture, Sheridan seems to feel a new world opening to him. There is, of course, much which he cannot yet comprehend; it is part of the lecturer's plan to outline points which can be thoroughly grasped only by means of the exercises which he sets, and by the practical experiences of work in the Model School; but enough has gone home to arouse in Sheridan the keenest interest in the work that is before him, and to inspire him with a strong desire to excel in the preliminary examination which is to test his knowledge, and

to show how far he is capable of reaping full advantage from his training.

As soon as the rest have withdrawn to the school, Sheridan and the other newcomers are set to work. They are required to prepare specimens of different kinds of writing. They read aloud an extract chosen from one of the Society's 'Cheap Books.' An arithmetic paper is set, in which the questions are graduated from the elements of the subject up to the most advanced rules. Opportunities are afforded for showing any special knowledge the candidates may have acquired in geometry, in mensuration, and in geography. In particular their grasp of language is tested by a searching set of questions, given *viva voce*, upon the subject matter of passages previously read.

As there are but five under examination, the results are ready early, and between two and three o'clock Sheridan is summoned into the presence of the Superintendent. 'I am glad, Mr. Sheridan, to be able to congratulate you on your day's work' are the first words he hears, and they send a thrill of pleasure through his heart. 'For good arithmetic I was prepared; the Irish schools teach arithmetic with a success I have not seen equalled in England.[1] Your writing is better than what we usually get from the south, as is your reading aloud; what specially

[1] See evidence of J. Veevers—Appendix to the First Report of the Commissioners, 1825, p. 478.

pleases me is the intelligence you have shown throughout the examination, and in particular I note as promising your power of understanding and appreciating what you read.'

After a short conversation about the school which Sheridan is to have when his training is over, and some hints as to the best use of his time, it is arranged that he is to take up work in the Model Schools next day. 'Remember you are not to leave it till you have earned a first-class certificate' are the encouraging words with which the interview closes.

A short walk—dinner at half-past four—leisure time till six, spent, as it is winter, within the gates, and then, from six to eight, Mr. Veevers again—these are the fixtures for the afternoon and evening. In the time from six to eight the attention Mr. Veevers gives is of an individual nature. The day's work in the schools suggests the exercises to be done; and, as they do them, the teachers receive such help and guidance as they may require. At eight comes supper, and for the rest of the evening the students select their own subjects for study or recreation.

As he goes to bed that night, it is with difficulty that Sheridan can repress his excitement at the prospect before him next day. For years he has been hearing of the fame of the Kildare Place Model Schools. Everything that he has been told since

his arrival tends to heighten the expectation with which he awaits the privilege of entering, and studying the methods which have earned so wide a reputation. In particular, he has been stirred by the accounts of a visit lately paid by a French nobleman who had heard of the work done at Kildare Place, and had come to see for himself how far the favourable reports were true, 'and do you know,' said Sheridan's informant, 'we hear that when he left, the Count handed to Mr. Veevers a report of his impressions, in which he gave it as his opinion that our schools were the very best in the whole world?'

When the state of affairs in the only school of which Sheridan has had any experience is considered, it is not surprising that his interests are thoroughly aroused. There everything—requisites, fittings, structure, pupils—had been in perpetual confusion. A prime source of confusion was the teacher himself. Possessed of some little knowledge, which an industrious and intelligent pupil such as Sheridan might succeed in snaring, so to speak, he was powerless either to instruct the dull or to control the lawless. All day long the noise of battle raged. Everyone was a law unto himself. The teacher's only receipt for attempting the accomplishment of his wishes was the strength of his right arm, and the force of his stentorian voice.

No wonder a sense of awe had stolen over

Sheridan when he was allowed to look into the great school room on Sunday, and saw there stretching away before him what appeared an illimitable array of circles, tablets, desks, all faultlessly arranged, all fresh and scrupulously clean. The examination on Monday had prevented his seeing the school in operation; but now he is to be fully introduced, and not only permitted, but bidden to note what he sees.

As Sheridan enters the Male School at ten next morning, he has before him a scene which has excited general wonder and admiration. There are nearly four hundred boys present. Round three sides of a room which measures 80 ft. by 50 ft., they stand in draft circles, or rather semi-circles. Iron hoops upon the floor mark out their places. Each pupil stands with toes to circle; at one end are those in charge. A single draft consists of from ten to fourteen pupils. They are taught by monitors, and the more advanced of the teachers in training, who use long pointing sticks which reach from the place of the instructor, at the end of the semi-circle, to a tablet hanging on the wall in front of the draft. In the centre of the room are the desks at which the rest of the pupils are seated. A platform, with the head teacher's desk, is placed at the head of the room. From the wall at the far end a large clock looks down. Eight iron pillars, each 29 feet high, bear up the ceiling. The light

comes from long rows of windows on each side. The first thing which impresses Sheridan, as he stands quietly taking in these general features, is the remarkable order which prevails. He has seen in the Dublin Reading Book[1] a representation of the classes at the circles, and has often wondered whether boys ever stood in order so exact. Now he has before him not one, but a long series of drafts, any one of which might have been the original for the Reading Book picture. It is the same in the desks. The pupils sit in long rows, each exactly behind the other. Equally careful is the arrangement of the slates, or, in the case of the higher classes, of the paper. Indeed, so similar is the workmanlike position in which all are sitting that it is difficult to resist the idea that the brains also move mathematically to order. A few minutes before eleven the master's signal sounds. On the instant all are silent and attentive. Then, in obedience to definite and carefully arranged directions, the classes change, those in the desks moving to the semi-circles, those at the semi-circles to the desks. All is done with a promptness and a precision which would do a crack regiment no discredit; to take part in, and, still more, to order such movements is an education in itself. At eleven the roll is called. Later in the course, the keeping of the books will be thoroughly explained, and model sheets will be supplied to be

[1] Cf. chapter on Publications, p. 221.

carefully filled in, just as if the student were in charge. For the present Sheridan has quite enough to do, observing and noting down his observations. A fair copy of all must be written out in the evening, and submitted to Mr. Veevers for correction.

As soon as the general observations are concluded, Sheridan is encouraged to go round examining in detail into the subjects being taught, and into the way the teaching is conducted. Mr. Veevers, who, as well as the master, is present nearly the whole day, gives him hints as to the order to adopt in his study, but the observations he is to make must be his own. To this task considerable time has to be devoted, and rightly. At the root of all successful training lies a knowledge of what to imitate, and what to avoid in the teaching of others. The first exercises sent in with criticism of this kind as a rule are of the crudest description. They have to be done again and again before they are allowed to pass.

Beginning with the lower classes, and taking with him the hints he gathers from the Superintendent's many lectures, Sheridan spends day after day from ten to three, without a break, in observing the monitors and the teachers in training. In particular, he derives help from Mr. Veevers' criticisms, as he passes from class to class, pointing out defects, suggesting improvements, and occasionally taking the class him-

self to illustrate what he wants to convey. Every subject is taught in accordance with careful and exact methods, and to Sheridan all the methods are new. The large use which has to be made of monitors, whose attainments are but little in advance of their pupils, makes systematic rules of procedure a necessity. These rules have to be mastered by the students before they can hope to put the methods in operation. So Sheridan works through the reading classes, appreciating as he gets higher in the school the good results, and the intelligence which is developed by the careful questions upon the extracts read. He studies the writing, from the earliest efforts in the sand[1] desk, to the finished pieces to which the Society's newly-developed system leads. In particular, his attention is arrested by the arithmetic. Here, if anywhere, he had thought himself well equipped, and he was right so far as the working out of problems, even the most difficult, was concerned. But the Model School arithmetic is a revelation as to the ways of teaching the subject. The use of dictation[2] he sees is of real value, where the teaching has to be done chiefly by monitors. Pestalozzi's system, especially in its relation to mental arithmetic, fills him with astonished admiration. He remembers the toil and trouble with which he had slowly acquired the power of doing compound fractions on the slate. Here he

[1] Described p. 235, footnote. [2] See p. 226.

finds whole classes able to work them in their heads. The more he studies the system the more he values it. By its means he attains the clearest insight into the principles of arithmetic, and the best ways of presenting them.

For nearly three weeks this systematic course of observation has been pursued, when Mr. Veevers says one evening—he had been commenting with approval upon Sheridan's exercises in connexion with some of the more advanced subjects—'You may now enter upon the remaining part of your course, you shall be placed in charge of a draft to-morrow.'

When the time comes Sheridan is surprised that he feels so awkward and uncomfortable. In spite of all efforts to the contrary, he finds himself perpetually falling into the mistakes which have been so patent, and seemingly so easy to be avoided when he was criticising others. For the first day or two he almost despairs of acquiring, in practice, the methods with which he has become familiar in theory. But the trouble he has taken in getting to the root of everything brought under his notice now stands him in good stead. He is comforted too by noticing that the Superintendent, instead of being surprised or displeased, has nothing for him but words of encouragement. Before many days are gone, the strangeness of inexperience passes away, and he begins to feel that he is in reality, as well as in name—a Teacher.

In addition to the practice of teaching, the latter part of the training course includes a number of practical exercises, dealing chiefly with organisation and school management. One of these, to which much time is devoted, consists in drawing up plans of different kinds for Sheridan's own new school. The plan proper of the building itself, and its elevation ; a plan of the schoolroom, showing the arrangement of the furniture ; lists of the necessary school requisites ; lists of books for the library, which, with the help of the Society, the patron is going to present ; a time-table showing the organisation of the school, and the subjects which it is hoped may be taught ; hints for meeting special difficulties which Sheridan's local knowledge foresees ; suggestions for the maintenance of good discipline, with the smallest possible amount of punishment ; devices for encouraging good attendance, and rewarding diligence and progress—all these things are included in the scheme which is gradually worked up for the effectual management of the school ; and all receive at the skilled hands of Mr. Veevers an amount of care and attention which shows the deep interest he takes in the permanent welfare of his teachers and their schools.

Other matters with which Sheridan is expected to make himself familiar are the management of the library ; the principle upon which merit tickets[1] are

[1] See p. 301.

given and redeemed; and the way of keeping the school books. He notes with admiration the careful and expeditious system, whereby an accurately dated and precise account is kept of each pupil, from the day he enters to the day he leaves the school. Blank forms, which have been published by the Society, are supplied to him; he takes keen pleasure in filling them with the histories of actual pupils in the schools, and looks forward, as he does so, to the time when labour of this kind will record the results achieved in his own school. The 'Class Lists' for reading and for arithmetic; the 'Daily Report Book,' a kind of school diary; and the Register, in which a summary of the pupils' progress is permanently preserved, all are mastered with little delay. More time has to be spent upon the intricacies of the monitorial system. Perhaps the feeling that, so far as he is concerned, the subject is mainly theoretical, robs the study of its interest. He can see clearly enough that where, as in the Model Schools, a single teacher has to deal with hundreds of pupils, there the monitorial system is essential. But he is not so sure that it will be required in country schools of moderate size, and he knows that in some localities serious difficulties with both parents and children have arisen, where the attempt to introduce it has been made.[1] For these reasons it is chiefly to his own exertions that he looks for success. He will be glad of a limited amount of

[1] See p. 206.

monitorial assistance, if available; but he lays his plans with a view to the fact that monitors are often an impossibility. It is different with another very prominent feature of the new method—the drill. From the moment when, shortly after first entering the schoolroom, he saw the whole body of pupils, nearly five hundred in all, changing places, Sheridan had lost no opportunity of becoming acquainted with the very elaborate system of drill which prevailed. So soon as he had been placed in charge of a draft, he had had experience of a subordinate kind, in directing the movements of the pupils. Since then he has made daily use of a device contrived by Mr. Veevers for the convenience of the teachers in training. The lesser of the two recreation grounds is paved, and the stones are so arranged as to divide it into numberless geometrical figures. This is accomplished by means of lines which cross the space in different directions. They, and the figures which their intersections make, form guiding lines, along which the pupils move to the word of command. High at one side is raised a stone platform[1] from which the movements are directed. To have given the necessary amount of practice inside the schoolroom would have paralysed everything else. Here, however, successive detachments can be drilled all

[1] The lines were *in situ* in 1884. The concreting of the playground has since obliterated them. The stone platform remains.

day long, with benefit to themselves as well as to the teacher. Schools of all sizes can be imagined. They can be broken up into classes and drafts, to suit any possible complexity of organisation. They can be changed and rechanged in an inexhaustible variety of ways. To teachers of intelligence the advantages of practice of such a kind are incalculable. By its help, Sheridan, in addition to acquiring an intimate knowledge of the *minutiæ* of the subject itself, attains in a short time to remarkable powers of discipline and control.

And now the weeks of training are rapidly drawing to a close. Sheridan's progress has been such that he daily expects the setting of his final exercise. One morning shortly before roll call, he notices the entrance of a visitor, who is received with special signs of respect. All through the training time visitors have been numerous. Strangers were courteously received by Mr. Veevers, or his representative. Members of Committee came in and out at pleasure. Sheridan remembers that particular attention was paid to one of them—who he learned was Mr. Samuel Bewley. It is the same, only in a more marked degree, with the present visitor. And no wonder, for this, as he gathers from one of the senior pupils, is none other than Mr. J. Devonsher Jackson, the Honorary Secretary of the Society, a man whose talents and zeal everyone respects, whose kindliness wins all hearts. Presently with a shock

of glad surprise, Sheridan becomes aware that Mr. Veevers is pointing him out. The next minute Mr. Jackson is beside him. 'And so you are Redmond Sheridan. I have just returned from the south, where I met your patron. He was full of enquiries about you. From what Mr. Veevers tells me I shall be able to give him very good answers. But as I should like to see something myself of what you can do, I shall ask you to call the roll, and conduct the changes, Mr. Veevers has sanctioned your so doing.'

For a moment Sheridan can scarcely realise what he hears. To be placed in command of the whole school at roll call, is the highest honour ever bestowed. It is even enhanced by coming to him from Mr. Jackson. But his hesitation is no more than momentary; careful study and intelligent practice stand him in good stead. 'I do not think I have ever seen it done better by a student,' is Mr. Veevers' comment when the test is over. With this achievement Sheridan's training may be said to have closed. The results of the final examination, which the Superintendent now proceeds to hold, are a foregone conclusion. A First Class Certificate, and a valuable set of books as prizes, are the result; and Sheridan in a day or two is on his way back to the south. He is glad at the prospect of being at home once more; and the thoughts of all that he may be able to do in his own school lighten the tediousness of the journey. But he will never forget Kildare

Place, and the kind friends who have won his confidence and admiration.

From the above description the nature of the training given by the Education Society will be sufficiently understood. It only remains to describe the training of mistresses, in so far as it offered any distinctive features; to give a general summary of the training work accomplished; and finally to make some attempt to estimate the benefits which the training of teachers conferred upon the country.

The 'Seminary' for training masters, as we have seen, was opened in School Street in 1814. It was ten years before a similar step on behalf of mistresses was taken at Kildare Place. Two reasons are assigned for this departure.[1] From different parts of the country applications for the admission of mistresses to training came pouring in. The benefits which had flowed from the training of masters made it impossible to doubt the wisdom of extending the advantages to women. When the country asked, and the Society approved of what was asked, the duty of going forward was plain.

For the reception of the mistresses the house known as 2 Kildare Place was taken, and a superintendent was found in Miss Jane Edkins, a lady who for twenty years had acted as governess in prominent Irish families. That she might obtain the special knowledge needed for her new work, Miss Edkins

[1] Report xii. pp. 24, 25. Report xiii. p. 21.

was sent, at the expense of the Committee, to visit schools in Liverpool, Manchester, and Birmingham, and to spend some weeks at the Borough Road Schools, where the training of mistresses had been undertaken by the British and Foreign Society. 'This advantage,' says the Committee, 'was obtained through the liberality of the directors of that institution, from whom your Society has received the most kind and effective assistance on all occasions.'[1] How far Miss Edkins profited by her advantages does not appear. She certainly is not to be classed among the officials who stand out prominently for the services which they rendered. Conscientious she undoubtedly was, and faithful to the Society's interests,[2] but such letters and documents of hers as remain seem to justify the description given to the present writer by a teacher still alive,[3] whom Miss Edkins trained in the thirties. While speaking in warm terms of Mr. Veevers and others, she compressed into a single phrase her recollection of Miss Edkins—'she was fussy.'

The house over which Miss Edkins was placed was fitted for the accommodation of thirty mistresses.

[1] Report xiii. p 22.

[2] Rather than leave when the Government grants were withdrawn she accepted a lower salary, refusing advantageous offers elsewhere, and declining to apply for a post under the National Board, though invited to do so by Mrs. Stanley, wife of the Chief Secretary.

[3] 1904.

That the superintendent might gain experience gradually the number to be received was at first limited to six, but the applications were so numerous and so urgent that the full number were soon taken, and before a year was over some one hundred teachers had passed through the training school.

The literary and professional programme for the mistresses was similar in all respects to that prescribed for masters. In addition they were expected to become proficient in many matters which more particularly appertain to women. The art of teaching they acquired in the girls' school, under the supervision of Mr. Veevers. There, too, they studied the carefully organised system of needlework, which had added so greatly to the reputation of the Model Schools. At 2 Kildare Place household occupations of every description received attention. Cookery and laundry work are no novelties in the training of teachers. They were comprised in the curriculum of the Education Society, forming part of a fourfold course, in which were also included the duties of the housemaid, and those of the housekeeper. Nor were the so-called accomplishments of female education excluded. Lessons in singing were given, and French was taught. In all respects the Society made generous provision not only for the improvement, but also for the comforts of the mistresses. The staff of servants employed was large. If the bills paid are satisfactory evidence, the dietary must have been

specially good. The travelling allowances were such as would secure any possible alleviations of the hardships of the road. In fine, so much did the Society do for the mistresses that the severe economist may even be tempted into an ungallant suspicion of spoiling. Certainly the modern trainer of mistresses has good reason to wish that a similar liberality still prevailed. The stereotyped Government grant for mistresses to-day is thirty-five pounds per annum. For masters fifty pounds is paid. Under the Kildare Place regime it was held that the training of women should cost not less, but more than that of men.

To summarise the training work of the Kildare Place Society, so far as numbers are concerned, is not difficult. The training of masters began in 1814; at first only a few were sent out each year; but the opening of the Model Schools effected a rapid change. The numbers rose to over 100 per year, and by the close of 1831 nearly 2000 had been trained. The exact figure was 1908. The mistresses were fewer, chiefly because none were trained till 1824, but they numbered nearly 500 at the end of 1831.

It is another matter to attempt to convey in any adequate manner the value of the work thus done. No one who takes the trouble to read the above account of the careful professional training, and of the order-inspiring surroundings at Kildare Place, will be likely to question the statement that the

benefits conferred by the two thousand five hundred trained teachers were great. How great they were is not so easily apprehended.

It will be well to call some witnesses to our aid. L. Mills, in his general Report for 1831, writes: 'It would be unjust not to notice the zeal of the teachers, especially those who have been more recently trained. Of very many I feel myself quite unable to speak as well as they deserve. . . . I am firmly persuaded that neither England nor Scotland could exhibit schools in which so much information, more neat and orderly habits, nor in which, taking them altogether, the system is so efficient as the schools over which these men preside. Very frequently have the gentlemen of the county informed me that in the class of schools I now allude to they considered the education given, as far as it extended, more valuable than that to be met with in costly establishments.'

It would be easy to multiply passages bearing similar testimony from the reports of the other inspectors. L. Mills has been cited as the senior inspector of the Society. It will suffice to give the opinion formed by the junior inspector, the Rev. John Conolly, on coming freshly into contact with Kildare Place results. In his General Report for 1830 he writes:

'When zeal, energy, and ability are wanting in the teachers, schools must be inefficient; but I sin-

cerely rejoice to be able to vindicate the great majority of teachers under the Society's patronage from the charge of being herein defective. On the contrary, I feel there is ample reason to be gratified; . . . whether I regard the extent of their attainments, their earnestness in the application of their abilities for the improvement of their pupils, their desire to meet the wishes of their employers, and the propriety of their demeanour and strictness of their moral character . . . they are a respectable class of men, and a credit to the institution under whose auspices they act. Under the care of such persons the pupils enjoy the benefit of *good instruction* and *useful example*. In very many cases the proficiency and intelligence displayed by scholars was such as infinitely to surpass all that I had been led to expect, and their conduct merited my decided approbation. Wherever the improved system and the general arrangement of the Model Schools appeared to have been attentively observed I had reason invariably to express my marked satisfaction, both as to the acquirements of the pupils and as to their deportment. For this cause I the more regret the dislike to some parts of the system which seems to pervade the peasantry to a considerable extent, and in consequence of which their adherence to the plan of school business suggested by the Society is often but partial.'

In estimating the value of utterances such as these

from the Society's officers, it is important to remember the purpose for which they were written. Modern reports of the kind are often intended to convey to the public as favourable a view as possible of the work done. The reports of the Kildare Place inspectors were strictly confidential documents meant to convey to the Society exact details as to their position and prospects. Engaged as the Society were in open warfare, accurate information as to their own progress, and as to the movements of their opponents was essential. Their chief source of information consisted in their inspectors' reports. Thus it resulted that the reports made no attempt to conceal unpleasant facts. On the contrary, their inclusion was considered to be a duty. 'The value of the representation of the inspectors' says W. V. Griffith in his General Report for 1828 'must certainly be enhanced by the line of conduct I believe they have universally adopted of giving no higher colour to the proceedings of the Society than they conscientiously believed them to warrant, and upon all occasions of stating facts and impressions, fairly and dispassionately. Upon a review of the course I have pursued in reporting to the Society, I am more disposed to accuse myself of looking out for faults (with the sole view of suggesting how they might be corrected) than of magnifying anything.'

These considerations justify us in placing high

value upon the testimony borne by the inspectors to the excellence of the trained teachers, nor does their evidence stand alone. Witnesses even more unimpeachable can be called. Attention has already been drawn to the fact that it was the good work done by the trained masters that led to the demand for trained mistresses. The Commissioners of Education Inquiry class the 'training of masters and mistresses' among the 'matters,' whereby the Society 'conferred the most extensive and undoubted benefits on Ireland.'[1] Even those, who, on other grounds, were most strongly opposed to all the Society did, were unable to withhold their admiration from what they accomplished in the training of teachers. In the attack that Lord Cloncurry made upon the principles and policy of the Society, we find him saying, 'I have bought many of the books of the Society and found them useful, I say also that the Training School or Model School, is useful.'[2]

The Right Rev. Dr. Doyle, to whom more than to any other the withdrawal of the Parliamentary grant was due, when setting up Model Schools for the training of teachers in his own diocese, placed over them teachers trained at Kildare Place, and in his examination before the Select Committee of the House of Commons he praised highly the way in which these teachers had been educated, and gave

[1] Report i. p. 58.

[2] Report of Proceedings of Fourteenth Annual Meeting, p. 26.

it as his opinion that they conducted his Model Schools 'in an excellent manner.'[1]

In the face of such evidence, it will not be denied that the Education Society were one of the chief, if not the chief agents in bringing about the improvement which is known to have taken place in Ireland during the period of its activity.[2] One of the aims which they kept most clearly before them was to exercise a civilising and elevating influence upon their fellow-countrymen. In their 'statement' or circular describing their objects, after referring to the intellectual and moral qualification which they expect in those sent up for training, they go on to say: 'They (the teachers) should be fully convinced of the importance of inculcating on the young mind a love of decency and cleanliness; of industry, honesty, and truth. The school-mistresses should also be capable of instructing in the several kinds of needlework usually taught in female schools.'

'Impressed with the importance of improving the domestic habits of the poor of Ireland, the Society have thought it right to make it part of the discipline for school-mistresses sent up to the training school, that they shall take part in the domestic management of the Institution, which

[1] See Report of Select Committee of House of Commons, Session 1830. Nos. 4606, 4607.

[2] Cf. *Studies in Irish History*, Lord Plunket, p. 191; C. L. Falkiner.

is intended for their instruction in order that they may thereby acquire habits of order, neatness, and regularity, and learn how to prepare cheap and wholesome food. And they request that the governors and governesses of country schools will recommend such persons only to be trained as school-mistresses as are likely to prove well qualified to impart instruction to the rising generation of females, in the proper management of their families and dwellings.'

No special exercise of the faculty known as historical imagination is required to understand what 'extensive and undoubted benefits' were conferred by the sending out of some two thousand five hundred teachers trained upon these principles. Even had all direct and contemporaneous evidence perished, it would be easy to form a mental picture of the improvement which the examples and the precepts of such teachers would everywhere ensure. We are, however, spared the labour of even this moderate exertion by the clear testimony which is available.

M. Donelan, one of the Society's R.C. inspectors, in reply to some queries from the Society, says:

'I would refer to the state of education in Ireland previous to the existence of the Society. I will admit that at that period a knowledge of reading, writing, and arithmetic was not unusual in this country; that schools for the instruction of children

were to be found in almost every parish, and that a proficiency in the rudiments of learning was as common in Ireland as in England and perhaps Scotland. But in such schools there was a total neglect of cleanliness and its comforts, an utter disregard of order and regularity; while the size of the room generally precluded all possibility of any attention whatsoever to proper ventilation. Thus was the health of the scholars endangered, were his habits unimproved, and his manners unaltered. These defects were observed by the Committee of the Education Society, and to their exertions is their removal mainly attributable. . . . The public taste is so far improved that the common hedge schools of Ireland have sunk into complete disrepute.'

One other extract taken from the letter of a private individual will be sufficient to complete this account of what the trained Teacher accomplished for the good of the Ireland at that date.

The Rev. Mr. M'Clure, writing in 1829 to W. V. Griffiths, says :

'Leathem, the master, is pursuing the explanatory method recommended by you with great succcess. . . I believe I mentioned to you a circumstance that seems to show the great utility of such an establishment. In my visits through the lanes and suburbs of the city I could tell, without asking a question, the children who were at school, and those who were permitted to spend their time in idleness at

home. The former, particularly if girls, are immediately known by the cleanliness of their appearance and their respect and politeness to strangers. I found them frequently employed in reading the Testament or one of the books from the Kildare Street Society to some old relative by the fireside. The latter are easily known by the opposite qualities of dirtiness of person and roughness of manner. I have seen these extremes in brothers and sisters of the same family.'

It is no part of the present plan to trace the history of primary education in Ireland further than the date of the withdrawal of the Government grants from the Kildare Place Society, but some testimony of later date may be mentioned in proof of the permanent character of the training work, and of the way in which its best traditions were perpetuated. The present writer has a vivid impression of his astonishment when he commenced inspecting schools in 1881, and came into contact with the Kildare Place Teachers of that date. Perhaps his feelings may best be expressed in the words of a prominent Member of Parliament who, at the conclusion of a visit paid in the seventies to a neighbouring school, said to the master, 'Well, I was quite prepared to find your pupils well taught, but I must confess that the splendid discipline and the order shown in all departments of the school work takes me wholly by surprise.'

This chapter may fitly conclude as it began with a tribute to the personality of the man whose genius and devotion inspired and controlled the whole of the training work. So long as the Government grants continued, Veevers remained in supreme control at Kildare Place. When these were withdrawn, rather than embarrass the Committee in their straitened circumstances by responsibilities as to his salary, he resigned his paid position, and as a member of the Committee voluntarily devoted his talents and experience to Kildare Place interests. He subsequently attained to the office of High Sheriff of the City of Dublin.

During a long and honourable career he splendidly fulfilled the expectations which had been aroused by the reputation he had early made for himself in England. Joseph Fox had spoken only the literal truth when he wrote, 'I am placing my name to a treasure fraught with the most lasting benefits to the population of Ireland.'

CHAPTER II.

THE PUBLICATIONS OF THE KILDARE PLACE SOCIETY.

Among the difficulties which beset education in the early years of the nineteenth century, none was more serious than the presence of bad, coupled with the absence of good books.

The Commissioners of Education in Ireland, in their final report (1812) stated, 'The poverty of the lower classes of the people incapacitates them from purchasing such books as are fit for the children to read; whence it frequently happens that instead of being improved by religious and moral instruction, their minds are corrupted by books calculated to incite to lawless and profligate Adventure, to cherish superstition, or to lead to dissension or disloyalty.'

Dr. Cooke, Moderator of the Synod of Ulster, has left a list of the books he was given to study in the free school through which he passed. Among them are *Hero and Leander*, the romance called

Parismos and Parismenos, *History of Captain Freney a Robber*, *Irish Rogues and Rapparees*, *History of Redmond O'Hanlon a Notorious Highwayman*. A long list is published by the Commissioners of Irish Education Inquiry. It contains *The Garden of Love*, *The Feast of Love*, *The School of Delights*, *Nocturnal Revels*, *The Life of Lady Lucy*, *The Life of Moll Flanders*, *The Pleasant Art of Money Catching*.

So keenly was this evil felt that, after the manner of the time, a Society was formed in 1814 for the purpose of providing literature of a healthy kind, upon terms which would ensure its purchase. The Cheap Book Society was inaugurated under influential auspices, and went to work with vigour. But it soon became evident that its resources had little prospect of coping with an undertaking of such magnitude. Meanwhile the Society for the Education of the Poor had been gathering strength, and making progress in public estimation. Many of those most interested were members of both Committees. It was natural that, in the interests of the work in hand, the proposal of a transference of responsibilities from the weaker to the stronger should be made. The ease with which the negotiations were conducted reflects credit upon all concerned. By the end of 1816, the Education Society had definitely taken over whatever in the way of books, property, organisation, and goodwill the Cheap Book Society had to give.

The additional responsibilities thus imposed, if they increased the labours, made no alteration in the policy of the Society for the Education of the Poor. The very undertaking of the task of education implied the duty of providing the necessary tools. Accordingly we find the Society, in their first report, declaring their intention of giving 'information upon the subject of erecting and fitting-up school-rooms,' and of furnishing 'books and other articles necessary for schools at low prices.'

When these words were written, the work of publication, which was afterwards to attain to such remarkable dimensions, had been already begun. It will be remembered that at the meeting when the Society was founded Joseph Lancaster had been present. He had been working out in England the problem which had now to be faced in Ireland. It was natural, therefore, that the Committee should look to Lancaster for permission to make use of his published works. The permission was readily given. For the sum of £105 leave was granted to reproduce the books in any form which might seem best for use in Ireland. In a letter dated London, 8 mo. 24, 1812, Lancaster thus expresses his thanks to Mr. Bewley:

'I request thou wilt return my thanks to the gentlemen of the Committee for the very honourable and delicate feeling they have evinced through the whole of this business, to my concerns and the

interests of my child. It will be a subject on which I shall reflect with delight; and it is one example which I hope will operate to prevent the dissimilar conduct of some Englishmen, who, under profession of public good, have invaded my private rights.'

Hints and Directions.

The first use made of this purchase was to publish *Hints and Directions for Building, Fitting-up, and arranging School-rooms.* Aware of a very general desire to provide schools for the poor, the Society hastened to furnish the information necessary for their construction. The *Hints*, in the form of a twenty-four page 'tract,' were in circulation before the end of 1813. Apologies were offered for their 'hasty form.' Haste there certainly was, but it has not left its mark upon the little book, which is a model both of clear arrangement, and of good print. Directions are given as to sites, roofs, floors, plans, windows, doors, fires. Desks and their arrangement are described. Careful measurements are supplied. The whole is illustrated by three excellent plates. Two are ground plans of school-rooms of different sizes. The third consists of working drawings of desks, adapted for being fixed either *on* boarded or *in* clay floors.

The use made of the similar publication of Lancaster is characteristic of all the work of the Society. So far as Lancaster's *Hints* fell in with their views,

they reproduced them in full. But they shrank neither from omissions nor additions, nor from criticisms. In some cases they went so far as to disapprove of Lancaster's suggestions and substitute their own, giving sound reasons for their decisions.

The Dublin Spelling Book.

Before the close of the same year, 1813, appeared 'a spelling book' and 'a reading book.' Successive editions of these soon sold by thousands, and both continued in general use long after the Society had ceased to be an active educational force. In their first form neither of the publications was what is ordinarily termed a book. It suited the style in which Lancaster advertised his wares, to speak of a single book as serving 'instead of six hundred books,' and to proclaim that one book sufficed for a whole school, no matter what its numbers.[1] But the pages of Lancaster's books for school use were not bound together. They formed, in fact, not a book, but a series of tablets, each of which was mounted on a card, and was of sufficient size to be suitable for class purposes.

The spelling book which the Education Society published on this system contained sixty tablets. The reading book contained one hundred. At a time when school books were almost inaccessible there

[1] *Improvements in Education*, Joseph Lancaster, London, 1806, p. 55.

was much to be said for this method, and we may endorse the views of the Committee when they say: 'The advantages of this improvement in point of economy are extremely great. The spelling book published by the Society is sold for five shillings, and the reading book for eight shillings and fourpence. Thus a school containing several hundreds of scholars, is supplied with sufficient books for teaching the spelling and reading at the trivial expense of thirteen shillings and fourpence, which need not be incurred again for some years if reasonable care be taken by the teachers.'[1] The Committee further take credit, and rightly, for having overcome by means of these publications a difficulty which otherwise would have proved fatal to educational reform. Until suitable means of instruction were made available no hope of progress could be entertained.

In the compilation of both the 'books' very great care was taken. For the mechanical portions, such as the lists of words to be spelt, Lancaster's tablets supplied the material. But with the portions to be selected for reading it was different. Here everything depended upon the quality of the extracts. Being intended for those who differed in religion, they must be doctrinally colourless. Being meant to teach manners and morals, as well as reading, they ought to be excellent in form, helpful and stimulating

[1] Second Report of the Society for the Education of the Poor of Ireland, p. 15, footnote.

in matter. To secure that the selections should cause offence to none, they were jealously scrutinised by the several members of a committee, whose differing religious views gave them the necessary qualifications for the task. Literary and moral excellence were sought by drawing upon various stores whose contents had already earned commendation.[1]

The success of the two publications was immediate; a demand for them at once sprang up throughout Ireland, and the Committee noted with special pleasure that they also met with approval in England. Before long second editions of both were called for. These were produced, like the first, in tablet form. In the year 1819, a new departure was made. If the tablets had many advantages, they had disadvantages also. Small schools found them inconveniently bulky; poor schools were unable to provide cards for mounting them; damp schools soon reduced them to a state of pulp. An edition in ordinary book form was therefore planned. The spelling and the reading tablets were put together, and were issued under the title of the *Dublin Spelling Book*. Arithmetical tables and outlines of geographical information were included; and the whole made to consist of three parts, graduated as to difficulty. The parts were sold either separately or bound to make a single book. The price of the whole

[1] *Dilworth's* and the *Pennsylvania Spelling Books*; *Reading made Easy*; *Lindley Murray's Reading Books.*

book was 1s. 2d.; of the parts, 3½d., 5½d., and 5½d. respectively. The first edition numbered 50,000. It sold rapidly. To meet the increasing demand stereotype plates were prepared, and a steady issue of editions, which, as a rule, consisted of 10,400, commenced. By the year 1833, nearly half a million of the parts had been distributed; and for years after the sale continued in proportions scarcely, if at all, diminished.

Before returning to the period when the Cheap Book Society ceased to exist, and handed over its functions, it will be convenient to complete the account of the more strictly educational books which the Education Society published.

The Dublin Reading Book.

In close connexion with the *Dublin Spelling Book* was the *Dublin Reading Book*. It was prepared with the view of supplementing the somewhat limited supply of extracts given in the companion volume. Some idea as to the scope and variety of its materials may be gathered from the following outline of its contents.

Part I. Short Sentences and Paragraphs. Select Sentences.
Part II. Narrative Pieces.
Part III. Descriptive Pieces.
Part IV. Public Speeches.
Part V. Didactive Pieces. Pieces in Poetry.

Like the *Spelling Book*, the *Dublin Reading Book* met with a ready welcome. From the nature of the case its sale could not attain to such large dimensions, for numbers would always remain satisfied with such matter as the Spelling Book supplied. But editions of 10,400 and 5200 were regularly produced, and the output averaged from 10,000 to 15,000 per year.

In connexion with the *Dublin Reading Book* was published a work which was not only original in its conception, but which showed an insight into the difficulties of primary education, that has often been sadly lacking in succeeding generations of educators. The Society thoroughly understood that it is one thing to teach to read, quite another to impart the power of understanding what is read. The same kind of difficulty which the educated experience in making out the meaning of, say a passage in Browning, is experienced by the uneducated in comprehending the simplest prose. A further trouble arises from the fact that the primary teacher seldom has sufficient command of language to make him an adept at exposition. In Training College work the lessons which command least success are those upon the subject matter of a piece of English. To combat these difficulties *Questions in the Dublin Reading Book*, with suitable answers, were prepared and published in a separate volume. The scope of the book may be conveyed by one or two brief extracts from the admirable introduction :

'Assisted by the monitors the schoolmaster would teach his pupils the meaning of words, of sentences, and of paragraphs: he ought then familiarly to *illustrate* and copiously to *exemplify* the principle, no less than to hear his scholar *repeat* the words of a rule; he should speak to him, and encourage him to speak in a natural language which he understands, and not in technical terms which are high sounding, but are most frequently pedantic, and ill understood. . . .

'Children may learn to read sufficiently well without attaching one single idea to the words they pronounce. The sound is all—the sense is nowhere . . . it is recommended that as soon as little children shall have learned to spell forty or fifty words, the meaning of these words should be taught them. . . . For the accomplishment of this object the teachers may find considerable assistance in the explanation of words in simple language, which is given in the first part of the *Dublin Spelling Book*, published by the Kildare Place Society. But it is not intended that the child should be examined in them in regular order; still less that he should give the answers there set down; he ought to be asked the meaning of the words as he spells them, and (as said before) to express that meaning in his own language. The next step is more difficult, namely, the explanation of short sentences. Here it may be well to begin with an explanation of the principal words in the sentence;

and then to ask the meaning of the whole, still helping the little scholar on when necessary.'

Considerations of space forbid further quotations, but enough has been given to show that here, at the birth of primary education, we have a grasp and mastery of the most important difficulties which the work presents. The loud and long-continued wails of inspectors over the general ignorance of the 'subject matter' of what is read, need never have been raised, had National Education been true to this beginning.[1]

The Dictating Spelling-Book.

In Lancaster's *Improvements in Education*[2] there is a section in his most inflated style on an 'improved method of teaching spelling by writing.' A short quotation will convey both the idea and the style :

'This method of spelling seems to be excellent, it being entirely an *addition* to the regular course of studies, without interfering with, or damaging them in the least. It commands attention, gratifies the active disposition of youth, and is an excellent introduction and auxiliary to writing. It supersedes, in a great measure, the use of books in tuition, while (to speak moderately) it doubles the actual improvement

[1] Cf. an interesting extract from an inspector's report, quoted Part ii. Chap. iii. p. 297.

[2] Pp. 49-55.

of the children. It is as simple an operation as can well be conceived. Thus supply twenty boys with slate and pencil, and pronounce any word for them to write; suppose it is the word "ab-so-lu-tion"; they are obliged to listen with attention, to catch the sound of every letter as it falls from the teacher's lips; again they have to retrace the idea of every letter, and the pronunciation of the word, as they write it on the slates.'

Underneath all this there lies a very important principle, one now universally recognised, viz. that spelling must be taught through the eye. There is also an anticipation of the modern views with reference to dictation.[1]

The *Dictating Spelling Book* was a series of tablets printed after the model of 'ab-so-lu-tion.' Its publication showed that the Society recognised the value of the principle which Lancaster thus emphasised; but they were not long discovering that a separate publication was not required in order to reap the advantages, so that when the *Dublin Spelling Book* appeared in book form the *Dictating Spelling Book* was discontinued.

The Extempore Arithmetic.
The Dictating Arithmetic.

The titles, as well as the plans, of both these books were due to Lancaster. They are interesting

[1] The chief aim of a dictation lesson should be to *prevent*, not to *correct*, mistakes, *A New Manual of Method*, A. H. Garlick, p. 191.

from the insight they give into the difficulties which had to be faced, at a time when both teachers and pupils needed elementary instruction. Jacotot's parodox, 'Everyone can teach; and, moreover, can teach that which he does not know himself,' received literal fulfilment at the hands of the users of these arithmetics. By the Education Society the order of publication was as above, which is a reversal of what would have been expected.

First came the *Extempore Arithmetic*, which consisted of a series of tablets,[1] in which the sums were set out in such a way that the work could be done *viva voce* by a class formed into a semicircle. Pupil after pupil was expected to supply the figure which came to his turn, or lose his place in class if he missed.

In order to make suitable preparation for this exercise the *Dictating Arithmetic* was devised. By its means the introduction of arithmetic was effected by dictating verbally every detail in the processes employed. In order that this dictation might be given even by those who had literally no knowledge of the subject, the *Dictating Arithmetic* acted as a key and told the monitor or teacher what to say.

Thus if the figures 7, 9, 3, 5, were to be added, the key would read as follows:

7 and 9 are 16, and 3 are 19, and 5 are 24.

This would be dictated to the class, who would

[1] It was also published in book form.

write it down exactly as it was given. By the constant repetition of exercises of this kind it was believed that classes could be made sufficiently familiar with the subject to profit by the extempore method above described.

No express evidence is as yet forthcoming as to the views of the Society with reference to this system. But the fact that the *Extempore Arithmetic* appeared some years before the *Dictating Arithmetic* is probably evidence enough to show that they distrusted the crutches which the latter supplied, and sought to do without them. Certain it is that in schools like those at Kildare Place, where they were able to supply good teachers, arithmetic was one of their most successful subjects.

The other mathematical publications of the Society comprised Pestalozzi's *Arithmetical Tables*: *The Principles of Plane Geometry and Trigonometry*: and *A Treatise on Practical Mechanics.*

General Geography.

To the study of geography the Society gave a decided stimulus, not only in Ireland, but also wherever the English language was spoken.

The *General Geography* is a portly volume containing 384 octavo pages. It deals with all the then known countries of the world, and is full and precise in its details, even of those which are remote. In the amount of information presented it goes far

beyond the ordinary primary school level ; indeed, there are few intermediate schools which would care to be held responsible for mastering as much as it contains.

More noteworthy still was the series of maps which accompanied the geography. No less than thirty, printed in colours, were issued at the low price of 3d. each. They included nine devoted to the world and the continents, nine showing the countries of Europe, three dealing with Biblical lands, and four skeleton maps.

It is not surprising that a publishing effort of this kind, between 1820 and 1830, should have received general recognition. Not alone did the maps become widely known; they worked a revolution in method. The edition of the *Manual of Primary Instruction*,[1] published by the British and Foreign Society in 1831, gives to the 'Dublin maps' the credit of having superseded those previously in use, and devotes a full section to describing, in detail, the geographical methods which the new maps introduced. In the lists of the British and Foreign Society's publications given in the *Manual* none but the 'Dublin maps' are included. What this meant, in the way of circulation and influence, will be best understood by the following extract from the chapter

[1] *Manual of the System of Primary Instruction pursued in the Model School of the British and Foreign School Society.* London, published for the Society, MDCCCXXXI.

which the *Manual* contains upon the work of the British and Foreign Society. Under the heading 'Extensive Operations,' we read: 'In almost every county in England schools have been established, by means of which upwards of *fifty thousand* children are now receiving daily instruction in the Holy Scriptures. . . .

'Throughout the Ionian Islands, as well as in the Morea, the Society have made vigorous efforts. *Seven* teachers have already been sent out to that interesting part of the world. Their schools and Scripture lessons have penetrated into almost every kingdom in Europe; our own colonies have received peculiar attention; and the great work has been materially forwarded in various parts of Asia, Africa, and America.'

Mode of Instructing in Needlework.

So far as the writer has ascertained, the first to attempt a systematic plan for teaching needlework was Miss Lancaster, Joseph Lancaster's sister. She published a short paper on the subject which contained in outline the principles that still find favour.

If we may judge from the notes which Veevers has left of his visits to English and Scotch schools in 1816,[1] very little or no progress had at that date been made in the subject. In only one of the

[1] See pt. ii. ch. iii. p. 294.

Scotch schools, which he saw, was the subject attempted. In only one of the English schools did it appear to merit approval.

The fact that Veevers reported on the needlework of the schools he visited indicates the attention which the subject was already receiving from the Education Society, and prepares us for the excellence to which Kildare Place needlework attained. Taking the groundwork of Miss Lancaster, the Society elaborated and published, in the book now under consideration, a system as comprehensive in its contents as it was logical in its order and precise in its directions. From the first stitches, which are to be made on paper, and with coloured thread, the book gradually works up to the cutting out and fitting of all ordinary articles of dress. Tables of dimensions and plans are inserted where thought necessary. Knitting of various kinds; and Rustic, Dunstable, and Leghorn plaiting are included. Provision is made for undertaking muslin work, lace work, worsted work, and thread work.

The letter from the National Society, already quoted,[1] gives evidence as to the recognised position held by the Kildare Place method of needlework. A set of specimens preserved in the Training College Museum, dated 1821, exhibits a finish and a perfection which nothing of to-day is likely to surpass.[2]

[1] See p. 130.
[2] Cf. pp. 294-296.

The Schoolmaster's Manual.

The last of the more distinctively educational publications to be noticed is the *Schoolmaster's Manual.* A book on Method, published so early in the history of primary education as 1825, has an interest of its own. But a special importance attaches to this *Manual* on account of the insight it gives into the educational progress which the Education Society had made. In Part I. evidence is given which goes far towards proving that between 1820 and 1830 the Kildare Place schools were second to none in the world.[1] A careful examination of the *Schoolmaster's Manual* reveals much that explains why the work done at Kildare Place was of so high a quality.

As has been noted throughout, the Education Society made large use of Lancaster's system. In no part of their work, however, were they merely mechanical imitators. This was particularly the case with reference to the methods to be employed in the school. We have seen how carefully the Committee watched the Lancasterian methods which Veevers introduced, and how they weighed them in the balance with those that had been previously employed. They were equally scrupulous with reference to their publication on the subject. So far back as 1813 the advantages

[1] See pp. 65-69.

of a book on method were recognised. 'It becomes extremely desirable,' says the Second Report,[1] 'to publish a detailed account of the plans recommended by you, which shall be accompanied with illustrations, so that it may, as far as possible, supply the place of personal inspection.' Even before the appearance of this Report, preparations for a work of the kind had begun. Its publication, however, was deliberately postponed; the Committee conceived it to be 'of such importance, and calculated to produce such decided effects, that they did not think they would be justified in laying before the public the result of their investigations on the subject, until they should not only have approved of it in theory, but also have had an opportunity of judging by experience of its practical effects, when the whole system should be carried into operation under circumstances which might enable them to decide on the efficacy of every particular recommended.'[2] Not till 1825 did the Committee feel justified in issuing the results of their labours in the book now under consideration.

It is never easy to look back from an advanced stage, and gauge the merits of past achievements. The tendency to measure the elementary by the standard of the advanced is difficult to resist. It happens, however, that, in the case of the *School-*

[1] Second Report of the Society, p. 20.

[2] Third Report of the Society, p. 26.

master's Manual, a standard of its own age, and one peculiarly applicable, is at hand. Allusion has already been made[1] to the *Manual of Primary Instruction*, published by the British and Foreign Society. In this *Manual* we have the official presentation of the Lancasterian system, as it was worked at its headquarters in the Borough Road School. In the edition published in 1821, a suitable standard is at our service for gauging the merits of what the Kildare Place Society had accomplished, as shown in their *Manual* of 1825.

We shall take up some of the principal subjects about which both books treat, and note their differences. The comparison is the more easily carried through, because of the general similarity of the books. Each is drawn up upon the same outline plan; each expounds a system which either had its origin in, or was largely influenced by Lancaster.

Beginning with the schemes of school organisation, the greater simplicity and adaptiveness of the Kildare Place recommendations is apparent. The *British and Foreign Manual* has eight reading classes, eight writing classes, and ten arithmetic classes.

The Kildare Place *Manual* has four reading classes, and four arithmetic divisions. The Education Society saw that little or nothing was to be gained by keeping the writing classes separate, and they perceived that many inconveniences arose from attempting so

[1] See above, p. 228.

much elaboration. They therefore adopted a two-fold, instead of a three-fold classification. The wisdom of this step was soon recognised by their friendly rivals. Subsequent editions of the *British and Foreign Manual* omitted the separate writing classes, and acknowledged that they were not needed.[1]

The substitution of four for eight classes was also an improvement. In small schools, with a limited range of subjects, no advantage was to be derived from a larger number. For cases where further subdivision would be beneficial, the Society provided, by arranging for the introduction of Divisions of Classes.

The chapter on Organisation concludes with a valuable section, which has no counterpart in the English *Manual.* It is written to the text : 'Let there be a time for everything, and let everything be done at its proper time.' The advice given is illustrated by a suitable Time Table.

Proceeding with the comparison we shall make brief notes upon the treatment of the main subjects of instruction.

Reading.

The *British and Foreign Manual* devotes some three and a half pages to instructions, or rather directions as to how the monitors in charge of the drafts are to proceed. At best they are little more than directions as to the drill which formed so permanent

[1] *Manual of Primary Instruction*, 1831.

a feature in the Lancasterian Schools. The following extract from the section devoted to the first class is typical of the whole :

'The children are seated in the forms belonging to the first class ; opposite to them is the alphabet wheel, or a board, on which all the letters of the alphabet are represented. The monitor of the class stands on the right-hand side of the board. He holds the sand smoother in his left hand, and a little pointer in his right, with which he points out the letters. He first fixes the attention of the pupils by saying '*Prepare.*' The pupils then bring up their right hands, and place a small stick or skewer, with which they have been previously furnished, on the ledge of the desk.[1] The monitor then pointing at the letter, says, '*Print A.*' The pupils immediately place the left arm on the ledge of the desk, and with the skewer in the right hand they trace the letter that has been named, in the sand. This being done, the monitor says, '*Hands down*,' when all the pupils put their hands on their knees. The monitor then goes to one end of the desk, examines the letter that each pupil has formed, and corrects those that are badly done, and at the same time takes out the impression on the sand with his smoother. He then names a second letter, which the pupils print, and which he corrects in a similar manner.'

[1] A flat desk with a sunk top, over which sand was spread, at this date was used for this purpose.

Here there is much in the way of direction; monitors and pupils are told how they are to stand or sit, and what they are to do. But instructions as to *how* the orders are to be carried out are absent; nor are hints given as to the difficulties which must be expected, and which will require special care. This is characteristic of the whole section devoted to reading. In the few lines which succeed the extract, there is a suggestion as to holding pupils' hands, and four letters are selected as of special difficulty, from their similarity in form. These are the only helps attempted, all else consists in directions and drill.

To the subject of reading, the Kildare Place *Manual* devotes eleven pages. It is plain that the writer was familiar with the English *Manual.* Occasionally a similar phrase occurs; and all through the same system of drill is employed. But in the Irish book the drill is wholly in the background, and a careful and philosophical system for dealing with the subject, and grappling with its difficulties, is developed. It would be interesting, did space permit, to print the whole of the passage for the lowest class, noting the advance made upon the similar passage from the *British and Foreign Manual* given above. We select, however, in preference, some passages which contain matter of a kind which has no counterpart in the English *Manual*:

'Now proceed to words of more than one syllable. The scholar who is master of mono-

syllables has conquered every serious difficulty in the art of reading, and has laid the solid foundation of his future instruction, for by means of syllabic reading, all other words, however long, are, as it were, converted into monosyllables, connected together. As spelling monosyllables on book consists in resolving a syllable into the letters of which it is composed, in order to reunite and combine their separate sounds into one articulation ; so syllabic reading consists in resolving a word of more than one syllable into the syllables of which it is composed, to prepare for their future reunion. Observe that from the time the scholar has perfectly finished his monosyllable lessons, there should be no more previous spelling, in which so much time is wasted, except indeed when the scholar meets with a monosyllable which he cannot read without previously spelling it. . . .

'In the syllabic lesson, the words (whatever be the number of syllables of which they consist) are read in the first instance syllable by syllable, as if they were monosyllables, thus pre-sent—re-pre-sent —mis-re-pre-sent—mis-re-pre-sent-ed. . . .

'It appears to us that the common mode of reading words of more than one syllable by previous spelling, can serve no useful purpose, and is mere waste of time.'[1]

In the above we find hints, whose helpfulness will

[1] *Schoolmaster's Manual*, ch. v. p. 42.

be admitted, for overcoming the mechanical difficulties of reading. Here is a careful note with reference to what may be termed its technique:

'When the scholar can read the lesson distinctly and accurately, word by word, he proceeds to learn reading by sentences; the rule now is to read slowly, audibly, and distinctly, being particularly careful to pronounce aloud the last syllable of every word, and the last word of every sentence, and pausing wherever the sentence admits of a pause.'

Even more characteristic and original are the instructions with reference to the duty of questioning upon the subject matter of what has been read. The attention drawn to this portion of the Kildare Place system in noticing the 'Questions,'[1] relieves us from the necessity of a quotation. We may, however, note that here also what Kildare Place originated was adopted at the Borough Road.

'Since the publication of the last edition of the *Manual* in 1825,' says the edition published in 1831, 'considerable improvement has been made in this department by the extension of the interrogative principle. At that period the practice of demanding the meaning of the word was confined to the highest class. The advantages resulting from it have caused a gradual extension, even to the lowest class.'

[1] See above, p. 222.

Writing.

We have noticed that the Education Society led the way in declining to have a separate set of classes for writing. They also took the lead in devising those helps, which are now so well understood, for assisting the pupils in overcoming their difficulties. While the *British and Foreign Manual* does little more, so to speak, than order the pupils to write, making but scanty provision even for providing them with copies, the Kildare Place *Manual* gives a series of detailed and careful hints, of which the following furnish an example:

'Great care should be taken that the scholars do not get into a careless manner of writing: in the beginning they should be shown that from an *o* many other letters may be formed, as *a*, *d*, *g*, etc., that all those letters should be the same width, that an *m* should be twice the width of an *n*, and that the beauty of writing consists in the proportion and the uniformity of the letters, in point of height, width, and slope: their having the copy paper of machine ruling, and their slates permanently ruled with uniform spaces (suppose half inch), and also divided in the centre by a perpendicular line, will have a tendency to promote regular writing; and if the scholars be shown specimens of writing of the same size, and told they should have a given quantity of letters, and no more, in a certain space,

it will be an additional means in assisting them in attaining regularity.'

Simple as these hints may seem, they show that their author had got to the back of his subject, that he had thought its difficulties out with the pupils before him, and provided solutions whose value experience had proved.

Arithmetic.

Perhaps the most noteworthy difference with reference to arithmetic, in the two *Manuals*, is the provision made in the Irish book for teaching the higher branches. From the first the Education Society were dissatisfied with the limited scope of Lancaster's curriculum. They emphasised their views by declining to confine almost the whole of the school to the first four rules. The British and Foreign schools, using ten classes, only worked their ninth to the end of compound division. For the tenth, they put down '10th class learn the higher rules, as reduction, rule of three, etc.' The Kildare Place schools made use of four divisions. The first two got to the end of the compound rules. The third took 'proportion, three parts; vulgar fractions, six parts; decimals, four parts; practice, three parts; imports and exports; tare and tret; rates per cent.; interest; annuities; discount, etc.' The fourth division went on with 'the succeeding rules.'

When we pass from the extent of the curriculum

to the methods of teaching, the characteristics noted in connexion with reading and writing recur. Both books enlarge upon the dictating and extempore methods described above. Further than this the *British and Foreign Manual* does not go. The Kildare Place *Manual* proceeds to grapple with and explain difficulties. It does not attempt methods for all the rules; but it does lay down careful first principles. Particularly helpful are its hints with reference to numeration. They go far towards removing the difficulties from a subject which to this day is seldom a strong point in our schools.

In summing up the relative merits of these *Manuals*, whose importance for our purpose is derived from the insight they give into the standards of English and Irish primary education at the time, we find their chief difference is the predominance of mind over mechanism, and this is the characteristic of the Kildare Place book.

The mechanical nature of the Lancasterian system was recognised by the Education Society. Where the directions as to drill and school order gave promise of permanent utility, they pressed them into their service; but they perceived clearly that education must be based on something more solid than mechanical routine, and they spared no pains to supply the want. It is gratifying to find that the value of the work thus done was clearly perceived at the Borough Road. We have already noted the

use made of the 'Dublin maps' and the extended introduction of the interrogative system. Similar evidence will be offered in connexion with the 'Cheap Books' of the Society, which are next to claim attention. Everything points to a ready use on the part of the British and Foreign Society of all the Kildare Place publications, and to a full recognition of their educational value.[1]

With the *Schoolmaster's Manual* we bring to a close all that it is necessary to say about the more directly educational books of the Society, and we proceed to consider the publications of a more general character, which commenced when the Cheap Book Society ceased operations in 1816. Very soon after their formation, the Education Society realised that they were face to face with a serious danger. Seeking above all the good of their fellow countrymen, and looking upon education as the road to this goal, they had to ask themselves the questions—what benefit was it to confer a power when there was no prospect of its healthy use? where was the advantage of teaching reading when the available books were better left unread?

It was a perplexing and difficult situation. To undertake the education of a country was a sufficiently

[1] Cf. a letter from the master of Hull Savings Bank Boys' School, dated Nov., 1835, in which the writer, a former student at the Borough Road, applies for sets of Kildare Place books, and speaks of having learned their value while in training prior to 1831.

burdensome task. What prospect could there be of success if the further labour of providing a literature must be superadded? For a year or two the matter was allowed to rest. There was hope that the Cheap Book Society would be able to do what was required. But as this hope gradually disappeared the Education Society prepared in earnest for the work. Soon perceiving that a need so widespread, if it were to be adequately supplied, would require more than the exercise of private benevolence and liberality, they were encouraged to apply for Parliamentary help. The result of their petition was a grant of £6000. Thus strengthened, the Society were able to commence preparations on a large scale. The aim kept constantly in view was to displace the discreditable literature which held the market. With this object they proposed to issue a series of books at once healthy and attractive. They were to be bound in the same style as their rivals. It was prudent to have outsides which would not excite questionings or prejudices. But inside they were to be conspicuous, not alone for the excellence of their matter, but also for their good print. They were also to be embellished with cuts so far as might be found possible. Most important of all, they were to be put on the market at a price which would make it the interest of traders to push the sale, and would tempt customers to buy. In order to carry out these plans a special Book Committee was

appointed. At first they essayed to undertake the work themselves, but soon the magnitude of the task compelled the employment of a literary assistant. The work thus vigorously attacked was in truth of quite peculiar difficulty, for in addition to the large literary and trade problems which lay on the surface, the religious question presented itself in a way which called for the most scrupulous care. If the books should be convicted, if even they should be suspected of any denominational tendency, not only would their prospects be destroyed, but the whole work of the Society would be injured. To guard against danger of this kind very strict rules were framed. Care was taken that, as on the general Committee, so also on the Book Committee, the different denominations should be represented. The literary assistant received orders to pass nothing to which, by any possibility, exception could be taken. What he did was in all cases most carefully checked by the Committee. At least two members must testify, from personal perusal, as to the fitness of all proposed books; when doubts arose all the members went to work. 'I could mention several books which have each gone through every member of the Committee successively,' was the testimony of Mr. Bardin, literary assistant in 1825.[1] Only after a sifting of this kind were works sent up to obtain the approval of the General Committee. Nor could approval be obtained

[1] Appendix to First Report of Commission, p. 464.

until they had lain at least one month upon the table for the purposes of individual inspection.

When the Cheap Book Society handed over their effects, one book was ready and others were in course of preparation. This was in 1816. It was, however, wisely determined not to commence the enterprise without adequate stock. A considerable number of volumes were rapidly taken in hand, and early in 1817 the General Committee were able to report that seven books had been printed, four were in the press, one more was awaiting final approval, and several others were in progress in the hands of the Book Committee. There were, of course, difficulties and delays; it was not easy to get the cuts executed; it was hard to make the printers and the binders keep pace with the zeal of the Committee; so it was not till Nov. 17, 1817, that the sales actually began. To the Society, eager for progress, it seems to have been a disappointment to be compelled to wait so long. But those who look back now upon what was actually accomplished experience a different feeling. Here were a number of amateurs suddenly called on to take up the intricacies of a publishing business. The substantial sum placed at their disposal, together with the crying need for healthy literature, peremptorily curtailed the needful time for preparation and research. The delicacy of their task demanded special watchfulness; its magnitude entailed exertions which were not only

unusual, but in many ways unprecedented. And yet, within a space of time which did not much exceed twelve months, they were ready with upwards of half a score of suitable books, and the editions which they presented numbered 5000 each. It is hard to see how there could have been more despatch; nor is it easy, when the sequel is considered, to imagine how there could have been greater success.

The following is a list of the books with which this important national undertaking commenced: *History of Joseph and the Creation*, *Animal Sagacity Exemplified by Facts*, *Voyage of Commodore Anson*, *Byron's Narrative*, *Wonderful Escapes*, *Dangerous Voyage of Captain Bligh*, *History of Mungo Park*, *Elizabeth, or the Exiles of Siberia*, *Robinson Crusoe*, *Fables of Æsop*, *Isaac Jenkins and a Friendly Gift for Servants*, *Little Jack*, *The Brothers*.

Not the least remarkable feature in connexion with the output was the price. The books were sold either in sheets or ready bound. The wholesale price for sheets differed from time to time, being regulated by the necessity for securing and retaining the market. The retail price was uniform. Neat volumes, strongly bound and plentifully illustrated, were offered for 8d. each if they contained five sheets, or about 450 pages; for 3d. with two sheets or about 180 pages. How these figures compared with current prices may be inferred from the terms

quoted by a London publisher,[1] who offered to supply books of a smaller type *wholesale* at 1s. 4d. each, and urged the acceptance of his tender on the ground that nothing cheaper could be done.

The Society had not long to wait for their reward. Although the books were not 'advertised in the newspapers or in any of the usual modes,'[2] they were immediately in demand. Within three months of the commencement of the sale they were going out at the rate of a thousand per week; before six months had passed new editions became necesssary. They were not re-issues merely. The editing was carefully revised, and new and better plates were supplied. Meanwhile the preparation of additional works was rapidly pushed forward. The second year's work was even more productive than the first; and by the beginning of 1819 the number of volumes 'ready' and on sale had risen to twenty-seven. The welcome extended to them was widespread; private patrons lodged orders in advance for the books as they appeared; the booksellers through the country, and the 'hawkers,' both of them in those days numerous bodies, found it to their advantage to become regular purchasers. The sales everywhere went on increasing. The figure for the first ten months of 1820 was 108,000; by the beginning of 1825 the output had reached the total of 1,000,000;

[1] J. Harris—Letter dated Jan. 13, 1818.

[2] Report vi. p. 22.

and by 1831, the last year for which definite figures are available, the grand total was 1,464,817. As the work went on, it was found possible to extend its scope and aim. The first desire was simply to get the books read; they were to enter into a life and death competition with the dissolute publications which held the market; their first business therefore was to amuse. But as they gained strength, and made their way, it became possible to introduce elements of more permanent value, until in the end the 'Library,' as given below, consisted of six divisions, and contained a large proportion of religious, moral, and educational works.

SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING THE EDUCATION OF THE POOR OF IRELAND.

The following works, forming a lending library, have been published by the Society, and are now on sale at their Depository, Kildare Place, and at Messrs. J. Nisbet & Co., Berner-street, London.

Religious, Moral, or Illustrative of Scripture.

Scripture Zoology,
Manners and Customs of the Israelites,
Selections from the Psalms, Proverbs, &c.
Sturm's Reflections,
Views of the Creation,
The Bee, a Collection of Poems,
Scripture Geography,
Destruction of Jerusalem,

History of Joseph and the Creation,
Nature Displayed,
Moral Essays,
The Wreath, a Collection of Poems.

Instructive in Arts or Economy.

Treatise on Practical Mechanics,
The Cabinet of Arts,
The Cottage Fireside,
Richard M'Ready, the Farmer Lad,
James Talbot, and—The Widow Reilly,
Hints to Farmers,
Useful Arts and Manufactures,
The School Mistress,
Tim Higgins, the Cottage Visiter (sic),
The Pedlars.

Natural History.

Natural History of Remarkable Beasts,
" " Domestic Animals,
" " Animals,
" " Trees,
Animal Sagacity, Exemplified by Facts,
Natural History of Fishes,
" " Birds,
" " Insects,
" " Reptiles,
Picture of the Seasons.

Voyages, Travels, &c.

Voyage of Commodore Anson,
" in the Arctic Regions, 1818-19, & 20.
Byron's Narrative,
Discovery of America by Columbus,
Wonderful Escapes,

History of Prince Lee Boo,
Voyages and Travels in the Islands of the Pacific Ocean,
Voyages in the Northern Pacific Ocean,
„ the Arctic Regions, 1821 to 1825,
Dangerous Voyage of Captain Bligh,
Life of Captain Cook,
Shipwreck of the Alceste and Medusa,
History of Mungo Park,
Travels in the Arctic Regions,
„ North America,
„ South America,
„ England and Wales,
„ Sweden, Denmark, and Norway,
„ Spain and Portugal,
„ Northern Italy,
„ Southern Italy,
„ European Turkey,
„ Switzerland,
„ Africa,
„ South Eastern Asia,
„ South Western Asia,
„ Northern Asia,
„ European Russia,
„ Germany,
„ Northern France,
„ Southern France,
„ Greece.

MISCELLANEOUS.

Elizabeth, or the Exiles of Siberia,
Entertaining Medley,
Robinson Crusoe,
History of the Robins,
Wonders of the World,
Keeper's Travels, and Select Story Teller,

Amusing Stories, and Mungo the Traveller,
Gleanings, and—William, an Orphan,
Fables of Æsop,
Miscellany,
New Robinson Crusoe,
Scrap Book,
Isaac Jenkins, and a Friendly Gift for Servants,
Little Jack, and—The Brothers,
Selection of Poems.

It is no small tribute to the care exercised that the subject matter of the books may be said never to have been called in question. It was a time of strong prejudice. Every move of the Kildare Place Society was watched with unsleeping suspicion. To have succeeded in bringing home a charge of proselytism would have been looked on as an achievement of the utmost value and importance. Yet in spite of all this, Mr. Jackson was able to say to the Royal Commission in 1824: 'I only know of one specific complaint against any one of our books . . . in the next edition we struck out the passage, though we did not feel there was any well founded objection to it; but as it seemed to have offended even an individual we thought it better to omit it.'[1] 'We learn,' say the Royal Commissioners in their Report,[2] 'that no objection has ever been raised to any of these works, except in a single instance. The objection was of a very trifling nature.'

[1] Appendix, p. 434. [2] P. 44.

It will presently be our duty to attempt an estimate of the value of the benefits which this great undertaking conferred, but before so doing, one or two points still claim attention. An interesting illustration of the prejudices which had to be overcome was given by Mr. Jackson in his evidence. 'There is,' he said, 'an unaccountable prejudice against our books in some quarters,' and then he instanced the case of a Roman Catholic dignitary, who, while denouncing Kildare Place publications, and refusing to allow them in his school, was actually found to have admitted and approved the 'Cheap Books' in ignorance as to the source from which they came.[1] An illustration such as this is eloquent, both as to the difficulties which confronted the books, and as to the skill with which they were adapted to overcome them. To have secured so great a circulation, in so unfavourable an environment, is in itself potent testimony as to the way the work was done. But we are not left to depend merely on inferences. A substantial though fragmentary collection of letters has been got together which shows the position to which the books attained. A help of the kind is needed. Those familiar with the vigour and versatility of the publishing trade of to-day, as they look at the rows of quiet books which have survived in the Kildare Place Museum of the Church of Ireland Training College, find it difficult to estimate their merits

[1] Appendix, p. 433.

and to understand the widespread influence they exercised. The evidence, however, is clear. Setting wholly on one side all that relates to Ireland, where special rules made for special acceptance, evidence is to hand showing that the Kildare Place libraries were in use largely through England and Scotland. The British Museum wrote specially, to ask as a favour—in the case of the Society they could not claim it as a right—for a specimen set of the books. The British and Foreign School Society made a feature of the 'circulating library' in their lists.[1] When a project was started for supplying the Coastguards of the United Kingdom with literature, an application was made to Kildare Place, which resulted in a first order for 12,964 volumes. The books found their way into Regimental libraries; they were exported in large quantities to India; and wherever they went they were approved. The testimony borne to them was 'there is no set so cheap or so useful for the people.' 'The Kildare books are the best known for the people. They are better and simpler than . . .' (here follows the name of a great London Religious Society). Such evidence as the above is conclusive as to the influence which the 'Cheap Books' exercised. Their intrinsic merits are shown by the eagerness with which leading publishers and booksellers made themselves responsible for their distribution. A

[1] See above, p. 242.

regular stream of orders flowed in from all the great centres in England and Scotland. The house of Nisbet found it worth their while to advertise extensively the Kildare Place publications, and were much disappointed when the Society decided against making them sole agents for London. Mr. S. Bewley, was justified when he said to the Royal Commissioners, 'there is not such a selection to be had in England; there is no such selection, I believe, in any part of the world.'[1]

Turning now to enquire how far the Society succeeded in the special work which, with the help of Parliament, they undertook for Ireland in their publications, two questions call for answer. Were they able to issue books suited to the object at which they aimed? Did they succeed in displacing the objectionable literature which everywhere prevailed? The varied evidence already given enables us unhesitatingly to answer the first of these questions in the affirmative. The books, both in quality and tone, were such as the occasion demanded, the best which the circumstances of the time allowed. It is naturally more difficult to speak with certainty as to the extent of what was accomplished in purifying the literature of the home. There are, however, some facts available which help us to draw conclusions. Early in 1823, the Book Committee were able to report that, except in Belfast, the

[1] Appendix, p. 446.

cheap books were everywhere supplanting the pernicious literature. In 1824, the General Committee were able to say:

'Your Committee feel quite satisfied of the beneficial results of the Cheap Book department. The printing presses in Dublin which formerly teemed with immoral and mischievous publications are now idle, those productions being quite unequal to any successful competition with the publications of the Society.'

Towards the end of the same year similar testimony was borne before the Royal Commission by Mr. S. Bewley.[1] Mr. Jackson wrote to the same effect in 1825.[2] These testimonies from within receive definite and official confirmation from the Commissioners of Irish Education Inquiry, who expressed the opinion that, in proportion as better books had been sent into circulation by the Society, those of an objectionable character had been gradually disappearing. The views of the English public generally may be represented by Mr. Foster, a member of the British and Foreign Society, who said: 'I do greatly admire those little publications, and almost envy the Irish poor the privilege of such valuable reading whilst our own population remain unsupplied; had I time, I could, I think, with a little assistance, form an association in London for

[1] Appendix, p. 445.

[2] Letter to Lady Greville, June, 1825.

this special purpose, your books are so generally admired.'[1]

In speaking of an undertaking so large in its proportions, so successful in its execution, it is natural to try to look behind the impersonal curtain of reports and official documents, and to inquire into the human agencies by whose means so much was done. The Book Committee has already been mentioned. Its most active members appear to have been Mr. Bewley, Mr. Hamilton, Mr. Jackson. These gentlemen devoted themselves with the keenest interest both to the literary and the business aspects of the undertaking. But the man to whom in particular the credit of the Cheap Books belonged was the Rev. Charles Bardin. He was appointed in 1818, upon the death of the first literary assistant. At the time of his appointment Mr. Bardin was curate of St. Mary's. He remained in this post till 1827, and in this way was closely associated with the Society during the period of its largest usefulness and most successful work. To his share fell the writing, re-writing, and editing of the library of Cheap Books. The Committee exercised the most watchful superintendence, but the individual responsibility fell upon the literary assistant. How well that responsibility was discharged is written in all that has been said about the success of the undertaking. Upon Mr. Bardin's removal

[1] Quoted in Appendix to First Report, p. 450.

from Dublin, Mr. Jackson was able to say that the Committee had never disapproved of a line he wrote. In 1827 his appointment to the curacy of Dundalk made it necessary for Mr. Bardin to resign the office of literary assistant. But the Committee were too wise to permit his connexion with the Society to terminate. In the warmest terms they expressed their well-merited approval of his work, and invited him to continue to write on their behalf. If distance from Dublin made it impossible to supervise the passage of books through the press, there was no reason why it should interfere with their being written. In consequence of this offer, Mr., or, as he soon became, Dr. Bardin undertook to supply 'copy' to the extent of some four books a year, and such was the demand for his work that the Committee kept him in constant employment for nearly fifteen years more. Particularly noteworthy were the volumes of travels which he poured out in busy succession. Himself a traveller, so industrious that he was able to say in some cases that he had 'gone over' every spot which he described, he was able, by means of the experience so gained, to carry himself in imagination everywhere, and so to light up his fancied travels with the touch of vivid personal interest. Not alone were the countries of Europe traversed by the imaginary travellers whom he introduced; they explored America, North and South; they penetrated Asia, north, south, east,

and west; they were not even deterred by the perils and the mysteries of Arctic Regions.

After his removal to the diocese of Armagh, Dr. Bardin's promotion was rapid. In 1828, he was appointed rector of Newtown Hamilton, and two years later we find him in charge of the important parish of Derryloran. Soon after he became examining chaplain to the Primate, and a recognised leader in the diocese. He died in 1841. To the end his connexion with the Society was maintained. He had been busy shortly before his death with a work on Oriental Customs. He devoted much time to supporting and promoting the Society's interests in the diocese of Armagh.

Before the chapter closes, there are two other sets of publications which deserve notice, as throwing light upon some of the special difficulties of the Society, and shewing the full view they took of their educational responsibilities.

In more ways than one the Committee made use of such opportunities as presented themselves for supplying the Bible, in whole or part, to the Irish people. Only one of these issues need be described. In the month of January, 1818, the routine of committee work was enlivened by a visit, which led to important consequences. A subscriber to the Society came, bringing with him a volume of Selections from the New Testament, which bore on its title page the words: 'By permission of the Most

Rev. Dr. Troy.' Here was an opportunity which seemed to open the way to the realisation of the Society's most prized ideals. Dr. Troy was Roman Catholic Archbishop of Dublin. If he had thus sanctioned the New Testament, the difficulties which beset the rule about the reading of the Bible must soon disappear. Clear, however, as the way seemed, the utmost caution was used. The origin of the book was first investigated; it had been compiled by Mrs. Trimmer, a busy writer of that time, and had received the sanction of the Archbishop of Canterbury. Mr. Parnell, then M.P. for County Wicklow, an ancestor of the 'uncrowned king,' had introduced it for circulation in his schools. By the help of a Roman Catholic priest he had obtained Dr. Troy's 'permission,' and he had arranged with Blenkinsop, the recognised Roman Catholic bookseller and publisher, to bring out an edition bearing the Archbishop's imprimatur. This edition Mr. Parnell was willing to make over to the Committee. So far nothing could be more satisfactory. This, however, was only the beginning of the precautions taken. In order to satisfy themselves as to the fitness of the book for their use, the Society had it examined with the most minute care. They even collated it with the principal versions, as, the Authorised on one side, the Rhemish on the other; and they compared it with the Greek. As the result of their investigations, it was decided that the book was suitable in every way;

accordingly the balance of the first edition of 1000 copies was purchased, and preparations were made for reprinting on a large scale. Here once more the Society were on their guard. Dr. Troy might sanction a book brought out by Mr. Parnell without extending the sanction to the efforts of the Kildare Place Society. They, therefore, sought and obtained a renewal of the sanction. Well might J. D. Jackson say 'they have been exceedingly cautious on all occasions, knowing the ground on which they trod to be delicate ground.'[1]

Thus assured, the Society moved energetically; an edition of 5000 was ordered forthwith, and the order was soon extended to 25,000. There was indeed good reason to believe that a great step forward had been made, and that the Scriptures would now have free course. Unhappily the hopes proved shortlived. Nearly six months after the original approval had been secured,[2] and when the edition of 25,000 was almost ready, a further communication from Dr. Troy was received, in which he requested that certain changes should be made. For instance, he required that the word 'repent' should be changed to 'do penance.' The influences at work to procure so radical a change of attitude did not transpire. To do Dr. Troy justice, he appears to

[1] Appendix to First Report, p. 435.

[2] The approval was given Jan. 28, 1818. The demand for the alteration came July 4, 1818.

have felt keenly the position in which he was placed. But the injury to the prospects of the Society was irretrievable. The edition came out, truthfully bearing the impress, 'by the permission of the Most Rev. Dr. Troy.' But no pains were spared to discredit it. The opposition to the Society was by this time beginning to take shape. Their enemies proclaimed everywhere that Dr. Troy's permission had never been given, so that injury instead of advantage was the result. 'Very bad faith' in connexion with the matter was imputed to the Society, whereas they had been guilty of 'none in the world.'[1]

The last publications of the Education Society which it is proposed to notice have a special interest at a time when the revival of the Irish language is engaging so much attention. In the early years of the nineteenth century, the number of those who either knew no English at all or were unable to take part in English conversation was very large. At the time when the attention of the Society was drawn to the subject, it was thought by some that there were as many as 2,000,000[2] who were thus dependent upon Irish, and 1,500,000 was considered the lowest possible estimate. Allowing for the larger population of the day, we may conclude that about one in every four could not speak English. For a long time little or no

[1] Evidence of Peter Blenkinsop, the R.C. printer, above mentioned, Appendix, p. 549.

[2] Report viii., Appendix iv., p. 51.

effort was made to provide education for the Irish as such. In 1812 there were no schools which taught in Irish. In 1814 very few. The first to recognise the need appear to have been such organisations as the Irish Society and the London Hibernian School Society. Under their auspices schools were founded, which gradually increased in number until by 1818 they reached a total of about 300. But the only book in Irish which was available for purposes of instruction was the Bible. Even this was unsatisfactory from an Irish standpoint, because printed in the English character. The people looked with suspicion upon Irish which came to them in a foreign garb.

Here was a situation of much educational interest, and one where there seemed to be the possibility of doing valuable work. The Education Society were not slow in recognising the best means whereby they could render assistance. Themselves busy with the foundation of English schools wherever openings offered, they could none the less extend a helping hand to the Irish schools by providing them with suitable educational publications in the Irish language. A competent Committee was accordingly appointed to investigate the subject, and it is from their most interesting report[1] that the facts here given are derived. They found that useful work was being done in the existing schools. They further ascer-

[1] Printed as Appendix iv. to the 8th Report of the Society.

tained that there was no difficulty in obtaining Irish speaking teachers of sufficient intelligence. But they reported that the efficiency of the schools was at a low ebb, and that improvement was not to be expected unless or until suitable Irish books should be available. Thus urged, the Society at once resolved to publish in Irish such works as formed the basis of their approved system of education. There was no necessity for an arithmetic, but reading and spelling books would be required. Arrangements were accordingly made for bringing them out with the least possible delay; and only the Irish character was used.

If this account of the Irish publications of the Society could end here, it would be likely to attract the unstinted approval of those who are busying themselves with the revival of the Irish language. The impartial historian, however, is bound to present the whole of the case. Devoted to the interests of their fellow-countrymen the Society unquestionably were; but it did not occur to them that those interests could be served by the development, or even by the preservation of Irish. 'Every interest,' they said, 'every ambition, every means of advancement and hope of profit for the peasantry, depend upon their acquisition of English.' It was as a means towards this acquisition that they supplied educational books, in the Irish language and the Irish character. In order to facilitate the attainment

of their object, they took care always to print the English in parallel columns with the Irish; and they satisfied themselves, by referring to similar undertakings in the Highlands of Scotland, in Wales, and in German districts where Sclavonian prevailed, that such a course was the best means towards the fostering of an intelligent study of English. Whatever the issue might be, so far as English was concerned, there was one result of their action which they believed to be certain. In any event, the Irish-speaking peasantry would be enabled to study for themselves the Holy Scriptures. With this object clear in view, all hesitation as to other contingencies or eventualities disappeared.

LIBRARY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

CHAPTER III.

KILDARE PLACE MODEL SCHOOLS.

To trace the origin of the Kildare Place Model Schools, we must go back upwards of a century. Explorers of the byways of Dublin, who have strayed from busy Thomas Street, down the comparative quiet of Thomas Court, into silent and untrodden School Street, will wonder at the featureless and time-worn buildings which are now known as the West Dublin Model Schools. In other places the Model Schools are conspicuous for the smart exterior they present. The first feeling here is that the irredeemable monotony of the surroundings paralysed the thought of architectural display. In reality, however, these School Street buildings were planned more than thirty years before the foundation of the National Board itself. As in England, so in Ireland, the general movement in favour of the education of the poor commenced with founding Sunday Schools, in which they were taught to read and write. St. Catherine's Parish claims the distinction of having inaugurated the first Sunday School

in Ireland.[1] It was for this purpose that the School Street Schools were built. To expect architectural merit in a school of the kind at such an epoch, would be as much of an anachronism as to look for a Christ Church Cathedral in the time of St. Patrick.

It was not long before it was found that Sunday Schools, if they were to make way in the practical work of education, must develop into Day Schools also. School Street followed the general example. As has been already shown, the zeal, the intelligence, and the success with which its schools were worked, did much to prepare the way for the foundation of the Education Society. For some years a close connexion existed between the two organisations, and the first educational work done by the Kildare Place Society was done at School Street.

Before long, however, it became apparent that a more prominent position would be a necessity, if the Society were to attain to the work of widespread usefulness at which they aimed. The movement towards the south and east, which has since so altered the topography of Dublin, had already definitely begun. Its direction suggested Kildare Place as a suitable base for operations.

Some provision for educating the poor of this locality had been attempted in the South-Eastern

[1] The Sunday School was opened by the Rev. R. Parnell in 1786. The School Street buildings were built in 1798 by a mixed committee. Whitelaw's *History of Dublin*, II. 852.

District Schools in St. Stephen's Green. But the Committee, by whom the schools had been opened in 1812 and 1813,[1] soon found themselves unable to keep pace with the demands upon their resources, and little difficulty was experienced in arranging for the transference of their work and responsibilities to the new Society.

When the negotiations were brought to a successful conclusion in 1816, the Society were busy with the arrangements for building their own Model School on the Kildare Place site, which they had recently acquired; they, however, willingly undertook to work the South-Eastern District Schools until the new schools were ready. Accordingly, January 1, 1817, saw the Society for the first time in possession of a Model School of its own. The premises situated in St. Stephen's Green have long since disappeared. Curiously enough, even their number, '62,' has gone. But the gap, which exists to this day, between No. 59 and No. 65, shows that the site of the original schools is to be looked for at the south-eastern corner of the Green, where Lower Leeson Street begins; and the fact that each school was able to accommodate 150 pupils comfortably, a number which rose on pressure to upwards of 200, proves that the buildings which contained the two schools must have been of considerable extent.

[1] The Boys' in 1812, the Girls' in 1813.

In these premises the schools of the Society were conducted for upwards of two years. The minutes of the Sub-Committee who superintended have been recovered, and the accounts of the school from January to December 4, 1817, are preserved in a curious series of monthly sheets. From these authorities an accurate outline picture of the school work done from 1817 to 1819 may be obtained.

The hours at once suggest an atmosphere of hard work. It was at first puzzling to find in the accounts evidence as to a heavy consumption of lamp wicks; but the Sub-Committee clear up the difficulty in one of their reports, which tell us that the schools were open from 6 to 9 each evening, as well as from 10 to 1 in the day. In accordance with the custom alluded to above, it had been the practice to give instruction also on Sundays. This the Society discontinued. Great as was the desire for the newly given treasure of education, children's capacities of endurance were not unlimited. The attendance on Sundays had been inconsiderable.

The provision made as to the teaching staff was characteristic of the ideas of the time. From 300 to 400 children crowded daily into the two schools. They were received by *two* teachers, Mr. J. M'Guinness in the boys' school, and Mrs. Conroy in the girls'. Those were the days in which it was held that only a single teacher was required, whether the school numbered 50 or 500. Everything the teacher

could not, or did not do, was entrusted to monitors. In each school there were six classes, with a monitor apiece. The girls' school was further strengthened by a monitor, trained in the boys' school, who took charge of the writing as a separate department, and by a work-mistress. The salaries of the staff compare very favourably with those which prevailed generally at the time, and for long after. Mr. M'Guinness received £100 a year, Mrs. Conroy her rooms, allowances, and £30 a year. The pay of the work-mistress was at first £14, afterwards £20 a year. Fivepence a week was considered sufficient for the ordinary class monitors, the writing monitor was paid about £6 per annum.

If we look through the school accounts in order to get an insight into the nature of the studies pursued, some interesting results follow. There are slates and slate strings for arithmetic; quills by the hundred, and paper by the ream for writing; wafers and ink are there too, and copperplate 'pieces,' and 'piece-stands.' Some of these 'pieces,' with their stands, may still be seen in the Museum of the Church of Ireland Training College; an excellent device they were, in the days when Vere Foster's and Thom's Copy Books were inaccessible. A close scrutiny proves that maps were not wholly omitted, even though geography was not a subject expected to be taught. But books there are none. In schools

which certainly aimed at teaching all their pupils to read, the absence of books would be extremely perplexing, did we not know that the system which was satisfied with a single teacher, no matter how numerous the pupils, professed also to be able to teach reading to schools of any size by means of a single book. In both cases the unity was more apparent than real. Monitors did the work of assistant teachers. Sheets or tablets made up for the want of books; to these the monitor pointed the attention of the pupils. Thus it happens that in the school accounts 'pointing sticks' (the modern pointers) and 'tablets,' take the place of books.

There were three special features of these schools which it will be sufficient to enumerate here. As they became permanently grafted upon the system, their fuller treatment will be undertaken later.

Needlework, which included cutting out and making garments, was a speciality. School premiums took the form of clothes made at the schools.

A school library was formed to encourage deserving pupils. If the system had no need of books in the hours of school, it placed no difficulty in the way of the circulation of books in the hours of leisure.

Great attention was paid to cleanliness, neatness, and general order.

A quotation from the Sixth Report[1] of the Society will be the best means of showing what success was attained in their first experiment in school keeping:

'Your Committee have great reason to congratulate you upon the encreasing (sic) prosperity of your school establishment, which is every day becoming more known and more sought after; the number of children applying for admission is much greater than can at present be accommodated; and when your Committee consider the useful instruction in reading, writing, and arithmetic which it affords, the industrious habits which it promotes, the useful works it teaches in the female departments of the school, and the strict discipline, regularity, social habits and cleanliness it enforces, they cannot but anticipate for this branch of your institution the happiest results in the moral improvement of the poorer classes of Dublin.'

On Jan. 4, 1819, the boys' school opened in Kildare Place. On Jan. 30th, 1819, the annual meeting of the Society was held in the girls' schoolroom when the Seventh Report was presented. On April 5, 1819, the girls' school opened in its new room. In the case of each school, both staff and pupils were transferred wholesale from St. Stephen's Green, and the South-Eastern District premises were afterwards sold.

Some account will be expected of the history of

[1] Pp. 20, 21.

a building containing from that time to this schools which have been second to none in Dublin, schools too which, between 1820 and 1830, might have claimed to be considered the best in the world.

The Society had been in existence some two and a half years only when the decision in favour of a Model School of their own was made, and contributions for the purpose were invited. As has been mentioned, Kildare Place, once the yard of the Shelbourne Barracks, was selected as the most suitable site. Rough plans for the necessary buildings were obtained, and Parliament made a grant of £6980. The money was paid in November; but, as the negotiations for the site proved complicated and difficult, it was at first lent on Government security at the substantial rate of 6 per cent. Meanwhile the Committee were busy treating with Mr. Luke White, afterwards the first Lord Annaly, for the ground on which the schools were afterwards built, and also for a narrow piece fronting Kildare Place where the house containing the Depository stands. They finally succeeded in obtaining the Kildare Place lot upon lease for ever, and the school lot for the remainder of Mr. White's term, which runs to 1946.

The conclusion of these negotiations was formally announced to the Annual Meeting held in the Rotunda, July 4, 1816, and, immediately after, the work of planning the new buildings commenced in

earnest. They were to consist of three blocks. The first two may be dismissed with a word. The house, 4 Kildare Place, was the first. It was intended for the Depository, for committee rooms, and for officers' apartments. To this day it continues discharging the duties for which it was erected. A set of buildings to stand in the centre of the yard was also planned. Different objects are mentioned in connexion with these buildings, such as a printing press, and rooms for masters in training. As a matter of fact they never developed into anything more ambitious than a porter's lodge.[1]

By far the most important of the buildings was the Model School. It is interesting to note the care devoted to its plans. In our time school buildings are too often entrusted to an architect, who, whatever his other merits, knows nothing of educational requirements, with the result that interior comfort and convenience are sacrificed at every turn to the exigencies of exterior beauty.

The Kildare Place Society went to work after a different fashion. Aiming at a school which in structure and equipment should be inferior to none in existence, they determined to gather together all possible information on the subject. Accordingly Mr. Veevers was dispatched to visit, and report on

[1] Removed in 1891 to make room for present cloisters and gymnasium.

a representative selection of schools in Ireland, Scotland, and England.[1]

The report of this tour, which seems to have lasted 6 weeks or 2 months, was presented towards the end of September; it is of particular interest, not alone in connexion with Kildare Place, but as a contemporary account of the state of primary education at the time. From the modern standpoint, what Veevers had to tell is not likely to excite admiration. Yet it deserves high praise when the circumstances of the time are considered. In those days there were no Parliamentary grants for primary education as such. The £6980 to the Kildare Place Society is the first on record. In consequence, everything had to be done by private benevolence, and it not infrequently happened, as Veevers found, that schools which had been built at great expense had to be closed through want of funds. In all cases it was absolutely necessary that the strictest economy should prevail. The chief merit of the systems of Dr. Bell and Joseph Lancaster was that they fulfilled

[1] He visited the following schools: Belfast, Lancasterian School; Greenock, Pay School; Glasgow, Calton Pay School, Anderston Walk Pay School, Gorbals School; Edinburgh, David Street Pay School; Newcastle, Royal Jubilee Free School, Female Free School; Durham, Dr. Bell's; York Schools; Leeds, Two, Dr. Bell's, Two, Lancasterian; Sheffield, Lancasterian Free Schools, National Schools; Manchester, National Schools, Royal Lancasterian School; Liverpool, Circus Street School, and others, nine in all.

this condition. It is therefore not surprising to find that all the schools visited were conducted according to the principles either of one or the other, or by means of a combination of the two. The nature of the school buildings was governed by the systems with which they had to comply. The ruling principle was that a single teacher was sufficient for any school no matter how large. Consequently the aim was to build large rooms which would contain all the pupils at the same time. All the schools Veevers visited were found to consist of either two great rooms, one for boys, the other for girls, or of a single room of extra size in which the boys and the girls were under a single teacher, but on different sides of the room, and separated by a division which was usually breast high. Anything in the nature of ornamentation was out of the question. There is no evidence that it was desired.[1] Had it been there were no funds to supply the longing. Sometimes the walls were unplastered and the roofs unceiled. Stone and brick floors were not uncommon.

As a rule, however, questions of warmth, together with those of light and air, were carefully considered; Veevers describes more than one ingenious device for heating the large rooms, and he generally found both light and ventilation good. The same

[1] Veevers' only reference to ornamentation consists in his approval of cast-iron gutters painted to resemble stone.

may be said with reference to school equipment generally. The demands of the systems at work were not large; they were cheerfully met, and in some cases the adaptation to the supposed requirements was so complete that the whole floors of the rooms were made to slope in order the better to bring the pupils under the teacher's eye.

In the light of this account of the school architecture of the period, the plans of the Kildare Place Model Schools are at once understood. What the Committee wanted was two large rooms, one for boys, the other for girls, each capable of accommodating 600 pupils each. They were particular as to ventilation, light, and warmth. They were prepared to provide the best educational furniture the times had produced. These requirements satisfied, it never seems to have occurred to any of them to give a moment's attention to such a matter as artistic appearance.

The rooms thus obtained would seem to have been finer than any hitherto erected. Upwards of 80 feet long by 50 feet wide, and nearly 19 feet high, they afforded floor space and cubic feet of air sufficient, even according to our modern ideas, for 500 pupils each. The sloped rooms common elsewhere were deliberately discarded, experience having already proved that a raised rostrum more easily attained to the same end. The floors were boarded, the walls plastered, and the tops of the

rooms ceiled. Four great fire-places in each storey were decided upon as the best means of giving heat. The light and ventilation came from long rows of windows on each side.

Comfortable and convenient for their purpose, the Kildare Place Model Schools were in the highest degree; but what can we say of their architectural style? The old prints[1] and the modern photograph, taken before the erection of the present handsome front, shew what they were like. A cynical friend visited the College while the front was being rebuilt. He denounced the change. An explanation of so extraordinary an attitude being demanded, 'Well,' he said, 'it was the ugliest thing in Dublin, and I'm sorry to lose it.'

No contemporary description of the fittings and furniture of the schoolrooms has come down. But not a little of the furniture itself survives, strong and good after its eighty-five years' service; and a study of the system adopted in the schools has enabled us in a former chapter to reproduce accurately their general appearance.[2]

The methods and the characteristic features of the schools will now claim attention. In order to understand and to appreciate them as they deserve, a short review of the prevailing systems of that time is necessary.

[1] The Frontispiece to *Schoolmaster's Manual.*

[2] See p. 191.

As has been shown,[1] economy was the consideration which, at that time, rose superior to all others. The education of the poor was impossible until methods sufficiently inexpensive could be devised.

Independently, and almost simultaneously, a Scotchman and an Englishman 'stumbled,' to quote the phrase of one of them, upon the plan which overcame the difficulty, and played an important part in preparing the way for the vast modern development of primary instruction. To Dr. Bell, labouring with slender help for the enlightenment of the native children of Madras, and to Joseph Lancaster, toiling single-handed for the instruction of London street arabs, there occurred the idea of making systematic use of the services of the senior, for the instruction of the junior pupils. Monitors, as the seniors came to be termed, had often been employed before; Lancaster himself had been instructed in a school where there were Monitors. The device was therefore no *invention* of either Bell's or Lancaster's. But to them unquestionably belongs the commanding merit of having grasped the importance of the plan, and of recognising its capacities for coping with the requirements of the situation. If, instead of the extensive staff hitherto deemed a necessity, a single master could be made sufficient for 500 or 1000 children, it seemed plain that a new road to learning would be opened up.

[1] See p. 274.

In the methods of school management which were developed by Bell and Lancaster along these lines, there was much that was common to both. Lancaster acknowledged his indebtedness to Bell. Bell paid Lancaster the compliment of imitation, without recognising the duty of acknowledgment. The rivalry which resulted between the two does not concern us here, nor are we called on to discuss the distinctive merits of their respective plans. What we do want is to ascertain the scope and bearing of the Lancasterian system, many of whose features the Education Society early introduced; to notice how far its principles had been anticipated, and to call attention to the prominent features of the methods which were finally adopted at Kildare Place as the result of the amalgamation. With this object, we must first glance briefly at Joseph Lancaster's work.

In the Lancasterian Schools the actual work of teaching was done by Monitors. The system was elaborate. There were Monitors of classes, one for each 10 or 12 pupils if the classes were large. There were also Monitors of superior grade, one for each of the principal subjects taught—reading, writing, arithmetic. They exercised a general supervision over the classes which were engaged at their special subjects. Above all, was the Monitor-General, directly responsible to the teacher for

the order of the whole school.[1] Before long, it was felt to be necessary to pay the Monitors a small weekly sum;[2] but for Lancaster they worked without pay, stimulated by the same rewards as the pupils, a brief account of which will be given later. He chose as Monitors those who were most promising in the classes, kept them in office for 6 or 8 weeks, and then promoted them to be pupils in higher classes.

For the due ordering of the large numbers with which he found himself confronted, Lancaster devised a careful school drill, which he worked by an elaborate system of signals. When Lancaster visited King George III., the King commenced the interview by saying 'I have sent for you to give me an account of your system of education . . . One master teach 500 children at the same time! How do you keep them in order, Lancaster?' Lancaster replied, 'Please thy Majesty by the same principle that thy Majesty's army is kept in order—by the word of command.' His Majesty replied, 'Good! good! it does not require an aged general to give the command, one of younger years can do it.'[3] Lancaster's answer explains the way he set to work to organise his school. He had

[1] See *The Quarterly Review*, No. 11, Art. xv., and for the fully elaborated system, *Manual of the British System*, 1831.

[2] *Manual*, p. 59.

[3] Quoted from Corston, in Leitch's *Practical Educationists—Joseph Lancaster.*

before his eyes the model of a regiment, and such was his success in adapting the principles of regimental drill to the requirements of the school, that the main features of his school drill have ever since been looked upon as essentials.

The curriculum of the Lancasterian Schools was confined to reading, writing, and arithmetic. Some of the most characteristic features of the system were connected with the teaching of these subjects. Governed as in all else by the question of expense, Lancaster got rid of the need for books by the introduction of sheets or tablets. Writing was first taught by means of the sand desk,[1] a device which Dr. Bell invented from seeing the children in a Malabar School, writing with their fingers in the sand. Lancaster soon improved upon the sand desk by the introduction of slates, an innovation of very great educational importance, at a time when heavy taxation made the price of paper prohibitive.

Arithmetic, like reading, was taught by tablets, and the difficulty of entrusting such a subject to Monitors was attacked by what was called the dictating arithmetic.[2]

In connexion with all these subjects, minute and exact rules were drawn up for the guidance of the monitorial staff, and loyal obedience to every regulation was considered as important as the careful carrying out of orders in the army.

[1] See footnote, p. 235. [2] Described, p. 226.

Absolute freedom of classification prevailed, nor was promotion in one subject dependent upon the progress made in others. By means of neatly constructed Class Lists, the proficiency of each pupil in each subject was carefully registered, and removes were made from class to class whenever required by the interests of the pupil.

It remains to notice briefly the rewards and punishments employed for the working of the great machine. Both Bell and Lancaster recoiled from the severe corporal punishment, which had hitherto been so inseparably connected with the idea of education, that no school coat-of-arms seemed complete without the lictor's rods, and no one, artist or otherwise, could treat of schools or schoolmasters without prominent reference to the birch. Lancaster's ingenious mind took free range in devising substitutes. Shackles or sacks fastened to the feet, baskets in which the culprits were hoisted, labels of disgrace hung round the neck, were a few of the various means he employed; through all ran the principle of using shame and humiliation as a deterrent instead of pain. But it was on his rewards that Lancaster chiefly relied for success. In each draft, the pupils took places according to merit. Those at the head wore a badge of merit, which they surrendered when they lost the place. Badges were also given for special merit in any single branch, as reading. By the holding of badges, tickets were

earned, and these again, when held in number, entitled the possessor to prizes, in the shape of bats, balls, pictures, kites, etc., a collection of which was generally suspended in the school-room in order to stimulate the efforts of the competitors. 'It is no uncommon thing for me,' says Lancaster, to deliver one or two hundred prizes at the same time, and at such times, the countenances of the whole school exhibit a most pleasing scene of delight, as the boys who obtain prizes commonly walk round the room in procession, holding the prizes in their hands, and preceded by a herald proclaiming the fact before them.' A still higher prize was the silver medal, which constituted its fortunate possessor member of the silver medal order. Nor was the competition confined to individuals. The different drafts, several of which generally went to one class, competed with each other, and were incited by similar devices to strive for supremacy.

It is no part of our plan, which is mainly historical, to dwell upon the merits or demerits of Lancaster's work. Much of the good has left a permanent mark on education, the faults gradually disappeared in the light of growing experience. The main importance of what he accomplished was tersely summed up by the Edinburgh Reviewer when he said, 'it is undeniable that Joseph Lancaster was the first who established in England and Europe a system whereby one

may teach a thousand not only as well, but a great deal better than by the old methods, and at an expense of less than 5s. a year for each.'[1] And from the same source we may quote an eye-witness's opinion of the success with which Lancaster administered his own method. 'Every boy,' says a previous reviewer, 'seems to be the cog of a wheel, and the whole school a perfect machine.'[2]

The foregoing account of the Lancasterian system will enable the reader to form a general impression as to the way in which the schools were managed under the Kildare Place Society.

But the investigations required for its compilation have raised a question which, though of special interest to Irishmen, is also of some general importance in the history of primary education. Seeing the intimate connexion between Lancaster and the Kildare Place Society, we naturally ask how far was the Society indebted to Lancaster for methods, and how far did they develop and improve upon the heritage received from him, or from their predecessors.

Lancaster's presence at the first meeting of the Society has been mentioned in the earlier part of this work.[3] There also an account is given of the firm attitude adopted when Lancaster's Society, the British and Foreign, attempted to treat Kildare Place as an auxiliary.[4] The spirit of self-reliant independence

[1] Nov., 1810, p. 67.
[2] Oct., 1806, p. 182.
[3] Part i. ch. i.
[4] Part i. ch. ii.

thus shown was apparent also with reference to the reception of Lancaster's system.

When J. Veevers came over in 1813 and took charge of a department in School Street for the purpose of introducing Lancaster's improved method, he was received, not with blind devotion, but with intelligent criticism. Here is the account of the means adopted for arriving at a decision as to the methods which should be finally introduced.

'The attention of your Committee has been much directed to this school[1] with a view to ascertain the advantages of the method of teaching introduced by Mr. Veevers, compared with the plan of instruction used in the School Street schools; and they hope, by these means, to be enabled to combine whatever is valuable in either, and thus to form such a system for the education of the poor as shall be most likely to forward the objects of your institution.'[2]

And again in a detailed report of a Sub-Commitee we find the following:

'Your Sub-Committee further report that . . . they did minutely inspect the conduct of the Model School from time to time since their appointment, and did commit to paper the various details thereof, occasionally noting the differences between the system of instruction introduced by Mr. Veevers and that previously used at School Street. . . .

'Your Committee are not prepared to express their

[1] The school in School Street. [2] Second Report, p. 19.

opinion as to the comparative advantages of each method where they happen to differ; nor is it necessary, as they conceive, that they should do so, such differences being in general perhaps rather apparent and superficial than substantial; . . . but they beg leave to report it as the result of their investigation that Mr. Veevers is fully competent to manage a school on the Lancasterian system as well as to instruct others therein.'[1]

The above passages may be taken as proving that before the arrival of Veevers a system was in operation at School Street which, in the opinion of the Committee, compared not unfavourably with the fully developed Lancasterian method. It would be too much to infer that the School Street system was wholly of Irish growth. The Bell and Lancaster controversy had rung loud through the land, and had compelled attention to the work which the rival educationists were doing. The Kildare Place Society from the first had made it their business to master all that Lancaster at any rate had said or written. At the same time it must be remembered that not only were the School Street schools wholly independent of the Society, but they dated from a period (1786) some years earlier than the famous Madras experiment, which first set Bell thinking how best to teach the poor. We have, therefore, in these considerations, a strong case for the merit and the

[1] Third Report, Appendix vii.

originality of the Irish work. A special fact which points in the same direction is the adoption by the School Street Committee of the undenominational principle, which they introduced at the foundation of their work. It is also probable that they devised a monitorial system independently.[1] And further, the Report from which we have already quoted contains a passage, which proves that the Committee had no intention of being satisfied with the somewhat confined scope of what Lancaster proposed. They give it as their deliberate opinion that 'the system of education to be recommended to the Society for the poor of Ireland should extend to further and higher branches of learning than the Lancasterian system seems calculated to embrace.'

From this evidence we shall probably be right in concluding that an excellent system had sprung up at School Street, unaffected by any direct influence from Lancaster. Upon this system the Kildare Place Society grafted Lancaster's new method as expounded by Veevers. They did so without prejudice either to the former system or to the new method; and in their further development of the work at Kildare Place, while they were ready and eager to adopt anything from Lancaster, which seemed good, at the suggestion of Veevers, they did not rest satisfied with merely imitating the best

[1] See School Street Report given in Appendix to Kildare Place Report, i., p. 29.

that was to be found elsewhere, but encouraged the introduction of any improvement which promised benefit to their schools.

At a later period an opportunity will occur of noting some of the detailed improvements which originated with the Society, and of calling attention to the influence they exercised both in England and Scotland. We must first attempt to obtain a general glance at the work of the schools from their opening in 1819 to the date of the withdrawal of the Government grants.

From the nature of the case there is never a great deal to be said about the history of a well-worked school. The work of one day succeeds another, regular, careful, precise, full of variety and interest for those who are intelligently interested in the problems presented; but for those outside, it is not much more than a continuous and unbroken round, which they appreciate or depreciate in accordance with the smoothness of its running, and the quality of the work which it produces.

But the system upon which a school is worked, including the developments occurring in its progress, affords full material for study; and no apology is needed for entering into such details in connexion with the Kildare Place Model Schools. As practising schools for Teachers in training these schools were second in date only to those of the British and Foreign Society. They were the first schools of the

kind in the three kingdoms to obtain large annual grants from Government. The work they did was not only of the highest excellence in itself, but it naturally affected the course of education in each of the sister countries.

Happily the evidence which has survived as to the schools is full. Not only do the minutes of the Society treat of them, but there was a Model School Sub-Committee, and also a Ladies' Committee. Some of the minutes of the latter, and nearly all of the former body are in existence. In addition, much detailed information is to be gained from the published Reports of the Society, from one of its 'Cheap Books' entitled *The Schoolmistress*, and from the Society's book on method, *The Schoolmaster's Manual.*

So exact and full is the information which these sources supply that it is scarcely too much to say that it enables us to tell with reference to the schools what was done, how, by whom, and where, at any given hour of the day.

Very great personal care was taken by the Committee to ensure the success of their undertaking. Precise arrangements were made for regular visits from the members of the Sub-Committee. The visitors were expected to 'stay as long as possible in the school, not interfering with the master, but superintending the whole conduct of the business.'[1] Books were provided for their observations. They

[1] *Schoolmaster's Manual*, p. 81.

were expected to bring before the Committee any suggestions which might occur to them for the improvement or development of the schools.

From the first there was an abundance of work to be done. The applicants for admission were numerous; and a large attendance was speedily secured. The regulations both for the admission and retention of pupils were exact and business-like. The admission was by ticket. Subscribers to the Society had the right of issuing as many tickets as they thought right. School fees at the rate of one penny a week were charged. Regular attendance was compulsory. Those who absented themselves for three days in succession without sufficient excuse were struck off the roll. The best method of keeping a record of attendance and proficiency was worked out with much care. The earlier reports show the gross number on roll, this number diminished by those dismissed for irregularity, the number of pupils who had made attendance during the week, and the largest number who had attended on any one day. The better plan of striking an average soon occurred, and was in use from 1822 onwards.

The forms which were devised for keeping the attendances and registering the proficiency of the pupils, are models of conciseness and clearness. They were published early and passed into general use. Especially interesting are the 'Class Lists.'

The system of free classification which the Society adopted,[1] if it was to be successful, compelled a detailed registration of the progress of each individual pupil. The Kildare Place Class Lists show, in sheets not as long as the pages of an octavo book, the gradual upward movement of every pupil; in arithmetic the introduction to each new rule is shown. Each sheet would last upwards of six months. The need for simplification rather than any educational improvement, prevented the adoption of the class lists by the successors of the Kildare Place Society; but their other books, their registers, their rolls, and their reports, stamped themselves indelibly upon the educational systems of the century. To this day the 'report books' of the Church Education Society are *facsimiles* of those designed for the Kildare Place Model Schools.

The hours of school were in general those which still prevail, except that there was no mid-day meal, and that the luxury of a Saturday holiday was unknown. The roll books do indeed make provision for entering a double attendance, such as obtained in the South-Eastern District School. But the night hours ceased so far as the Society was concerned with the coming to Kildare Place, and from 10 to 3 became the ordinary school hours not only at Kildare Place, but everywhere.

The arrangements of the staff, while they showed

[1] For a description of the system, see p. 282.

the elasticity and adaptability which characterised all the school methods of the Society, were in general accord with the one teacher plan. In the girls' school the great importance attached to needlework at first suggested the appointment of a separate work mistress; but the experiment of having two heads was not more successful here than in other places where it has been tried. For a work mistress a work monitress was substituted, and henceforth, in the girls' school at all events, the one-teacher system reigned supreme. The arrangements in the boys' school were more varied. Head over all was John Veevers. But his multifarious duties, especially his superintendence of the work of training, made close attention to the school impossible. One assistant, who was practically head of the school, was always allowed, and at times there were two. Three, or at the most four, teachers, for attendances which ranged from 600 to 1000, and even more, made up the whole staff of the Kildare Place Model Schools. All the main teaching work was discharged by monitors and monitresses.

The exact system which was employed is given in detail in the *Schoolmaster's Manual* In general it follows Lancaster's method, but none the less it moves independently, and it is particularly emphatic as to the need for going beyond what Lancaster contemplated.[1]

[1] See p. 287.

To reproduce the minute details of the work as it went on from day to day would take up more space than is at our disposal, and the majority of readers would find little to interest them in a description of the kind. We confine ourselves, therefore, to brief notices of the more distinctive features. Let us take first the three features already enumerated.

Very special attention was devoted to the promotion of cleanliness, neatness, and general order. Those who visited among the homes from which the pupils came, needed no spurring to realise the need for improvement. The rigid drill, and the precise movements of Lancaster's system proved powerful instruments for the promotion of order. Every well disciplined school in Ireland reflects to this day the good influence of the original Kildare Place example. Cleanliness and neatness were obtained by the strictest personal supervision. The Ladies' Committee was particularly helpful in this connexion. They arranged for the washing of the rooms, and of the pupils; they provided a barber to devote the necessary attention to the hair; they enforced compliance with their regulations as a necessary condition for admission to, and continuance at the schools.

School libraries were encouraged, and to a large extent provided by the Society, not alone in the Model Schools, but generally throughout the land. The instrumentality whereby this was accomplished has

been already described.[1] Here we note how the books were brought to bear helpfully on the system of the schools. All pupils were made aware of the existence of the library, but only the meritorious were allowed the privilege of borrowing. To obtain a place upon the library register became a legitimate object of ambition. The proper handling of the books, and their punctual return, were safeguarded by the required use of a form[2] prepared for the purpose. The value of the work thus done will best be appreciated in the light of the fact that a lending library was attached to every Kildare Place School.

We now come to the branch of instruction which Kildare Place made peculiarly its own. When Veevers was sent to visit Scotch and English schools, he was expected to bring back particularly full information as to the prevalence and methods of the instruction given in needlework. It proved a barren inquiry. In Glasgow and Edinburgh, out of four schools he visited, only one taught needlework, and for this it charged an extra fee. In the north of England seventeen large girls' schools were seen. In three only does he tell us needlework was taught. The Sheffield Lancasterian Free School is the only one which receives a mark of approval: 'Considerable attention has been paid to this useful branch of female education.'

[1] See pp. 53 and 60. [2] See *Schoolmaster's Manual*, Appendix ix.

Having thus failed to obtain inspiration from without, the Society set themselves to the energetic development of a system of their own. Their first idea was to devote the whole of each alternate day to work. This was soon given up in favour of the wiser plan of having the sewing every day, but only for a part of the day. Another experiment was to take in and execute work orders from without. The commercial, as distinct from the educational element, proved rapidly fatal to this plan. The arrangement for the disposal of the work, which found permanent favour, was a School 'Repository.' Everything made in the school was priced and sent to the repository for sale. Useful articles of clothing formed the staple manufacture. As a rule they found their way back to the pupils in both schools, being purchased by 'merit tickets,' according to a system to be presently described.

What led to the signal and lasting success of the Kildare Place needlework was the skilful and exact way in which the course was reduced to a system. Aided by the workmistress, Mrs. M. A. M'Laughlin, a *Sampler Book*, as it is modestly termed, was brought out. A single copy survives; it bears irresistible testimony, not alone to the extreme beauty of the work which was accomplished, but also to the scientific way in which the subject was graduated, and to the introduction of more than one device—notably, the use of paper for the early

stages—which has since obtained permanent recognition.[1]

The advantages of this reduction of the sewing to a system soon began to be apparent. The excellence of the work done frequently drew forth commendation from the Committee. The Kildare Place Schools rapidly established a reputation for a mastery of the subject. Nor was their influence limited to Ireland. It is probable that their example led to a reaction in favour of needlework in Scotland. It is certain that England was affected. There still exists a letter written in 1828 by the Secretary of the National Society, which speaks in high terms of the reputation of Kildare Place needlework, and asks for a copy of the *Sampler Book*.

From the three educational features which were specially characteristic of Kildare Place, we pass to the general curriculum. Take first the three R's.

Reading.—Here we notice the care taken to ensure that the pupils understood what they read. So necessary did the Society consider it to take precautions against the neglect of the meaning of the reading books, that they compiled the book of questions noticed above,[2] with the one object of drawing attention to their sense.

How well their plan succeeded in the Model

[1] The *Sampler Book* was afterwards developed into the *Mode of Instructing in Needlework*, described, p. 229.

[2] P. 222.

Schools may be judged from the following extract from the report of an inspection:

'The reading in the *Dublin Reading Book* was generally correct and intelligent; the proper emphasis was placed on the words, and the stops were duly attended to. I took opportunity, as each boy read, to see that he not only understood the meaning of the words, but also the import of the sentence or paragraph he read, and, as occasion served, I was enabled, by a great variety of questions, to elicit from them a very considerable amount of general information. The information extended to a competent acquaintance with much of general and natural history, some share of scientific attainment, and a reasonable amount of knowledge upon subjects at once instructive and useful. They were also enabled to point out the different meanings attributable to the same words when applied in different senses, and recite many of the passages in which such words occurred in Scripture, and showed a very creditable acquaintance with the roots and derivations of most of the compound words which were contained in any of the passages that were read. I have reason to be much gratified with this branch of the examination.'[1]

Writing.—What is described as a new system of writing was early introduced. No evidence is yet forthcoming as to its origin. It was not

[1] Report of Inspector Purdon.

Lancasterian. The *Manual* of the British system published in 1831, some ten years after its introduction, knows nothing of it. Possibly the inspiration came from France. The Society were careful to obtain French works on education, and some beautiful specimens of French copperplate writing are still preserved. If this view be correct, the adaptation and organisation of the system is probably original. It was based upon those principles of careful spacing and the exact reproduction of individual letters, which form the foundation of all modern systems.[1]

ARITHMETIC.—The Society took an early opportunity of introducing Pestalozzi's system. Dr. Charles Herbert Orpen, one of the Committee, had himself resided three months at the Institute at Yverdun. He brought the system and Pestalozzi's works under the notice of the Society in 1818. The following is the Committee's own account of the introduction of Pestalozzi's methods soon after:

'Your Committee, anxious to adopt into your school . . . every sphere of improvement . . . have during the course of last year introduced into it . . . the system of teaching arithmetic according to Pestalozzi, which has been for some time practised in the Abbeyleix Village School, under the superintendence of Viscount de Vesci. And your Committee have now great pleasure in being able to state to you that

[1] See p. 239.

the results produced by this mode of teaching arithmetic, as far as the experiment has yet been carried, proved extremely encouraging. They have accordingly introduced this system of late more generally in the school.'[1]

The good results which the Committee noticed continued. Inspector Purdon's report above quoted, and such others as remain, have nothing but praise for the Model School arithmetic.

Passing beyond the ordinary subjects to which Lancaster and Bell were disposed to limit primary education, we find evidence of good work done in drawing. W. V. Griffiths, one of the inspectors, of whose personal skill as an artist many evidences are preserved, enunciated the doctrine which in latter years has again become prevalent, that every child who could be taught to write could also be taught to draw. His principles were largely practised in the schools, and drawing was taught with much success. Such subjects as grammar, geometry, mensuration, mechanics, book keeping, were all included in the course of instruction and most of them appear to have been well taught. Great attention was paid to geography. The Society early made this subject a speciality. To help it they published their series of excellent maps. As in the case of the needlework, their success in teaching geography became widely known, and the maps spread everywhere.[2]

[1] Ninth Report, pp. 28, 29.

[2] See p. 228.

The fact that geography was until 1900 compulsory under the National Board, while it was optional in England, points to a vigorous survival of Kildare Place traditions.

We conclude this review of the curriculum of the schools with a notice of the religious work they undertook. From the nature of the fundamental rules the amount of religious instruction which a Kildare Place School could give was limited to the reading of the Scriptures and the explanation of the grammatical as distinguished from the doctrinal meaning of the passages. For some unexplained reason, in the Model Schools, even this confined field of religious teaching was left unoccupied, or partially unoccupied, at first. It can scarcely be possible that for a year or two there was no reading of the Scriptures, but the first notice which appears in the minutes is in 1822, when it was ordered that 'towards the close of each day's business' one of the pupils should read for the rest a chapter from the Bible. By a later arrangement the reading became general, each class reading for an hour three times a week; and finally in 1833, shortly after the period to which this history more immediately refers, it was ordered that each class should read every day, and a course consisting of alternate portions from the Old and New Testament was prescribed.

How little was accomplished by this system we

have seen in the evidence of J. Veevers, and in the difficulties experienced by the Committee, in trying to form a working rule, which would combine inclusion of meaning with exclusion of doctrine.[1]

Before bringing this chapter to a conclusion, a notice of the system of punishments and rewards, which need be but brief, claims insertion.

The Society were in accord with the views which led Lancaster to turn his back upon the brutal systems that had formerly prevailed. While not absolutely forbidding "corporeal" (*sic*) punishment they discouraged it, and allowed it only under clearly defined conditions. Thus far they were in entire accord with Lancaster. But when they came to construct a positive system for themselves they showed much practical wisdom in avoiding the somewhat eccentric devices which Lancaster's ingenuity had introduced. The only distinctive punishment which has been traced was a punishment desk, painted black, at which culprits were placed to make their shame conspicuous. It was chiefly upon rewards they relied. It is probable, though not certain, that book premiums were given to the pupils who distinguished themselves in the periodical examinations. The main system of rewards consisted in what was called the giving out and the redemption of 'merit tickets.'[2] These tickets, which were

[1] See above, pp. 143, 148, 153.

[2] See the account of Lancaster's similar system, pp. 282-283.

graduated in value, were given under a variety of rules, partly for prominence in learning, partly for excellence in conduct. They were redeemed at fixed periods, *i.e.* exchanged for their equivalents in clothes, books, school requisites, or other useful articles; by their instrumentality a large portion of the work from the depository of the girls' school found a useful outlet.[1]

The whole section of the *Manual* which deals with rewards and punishments anticipates much of the best that has since been put forth upon the subject. As a sample of its comprehensive breadth, we quote a passage summing up the principles upon which the system of rewards was founded.

Rewards and Punishments.

There exists some difference of opinion as to the propriety of using rewards and punishments in the education of children; but it has been well observed that 'in the government of this our world God manifestly employs rewards and punishments. They are held out to influence His creatures, and lead them to the performance of their duty and to their true happiness.' We therefore feel ourselves fully sanctioned in adopting the same principle. At the same time we are well aware that great discretion and good feeling are required for the due distribution both of rewards and punishments, and that if ill applied they may lead to the formation of very injurious habits and dispositions. . . . It has been endeavoured so to proportion these rewards that they should be sufficient to operate as a stimulus to exertion, and yet that they should never be of such value in the eyes of the children

[1] See *Schoolmaster's Manual*, pp. 70, 71.

as to become the chief object for which they would be desirous of making progress in the school, and we own that we so far feel the weight of the objections that have been made to the system of rewards as to be anxious that they should be distributed as a tribute of approbation to individual rather than comparative merit; that the pupil who obtains them should claim them as a reward for his own diligence and advancement, and not as a distinguishing mark of his superiority over others, and that they should be given rather as a means of promoting exertion than of exciting emulation.'

Having now recounted the origin of the Kildare Place Model Schools, described their appearance in the days of their early prosperity, and detailed their methods, more particularly those which were original and in advance of the time, it only remains to summarise the amount of school work done, with its cost, and to give some outside opinions as to its value.

The Society themselves provide the summary. In their Report for the year 1831, the last year of the Government grants, it is stated that the number of pupils who had passed through the Schools since their opening in 1819 amounted to 18,746.

In the previous report[1] the cost of each child for the year 1829 is given. Two shillings and fivepence is the amount.

The following two opinions from outside sources are authoritative, and need no supplement.

The First Report of the Commission of Educa-

[1] P. 40.

tional Inquiry, which was presented to Parliament in 1825, thus speaks of the School:[1]

'The Male and Female Schools at Kildare Place are the next subjects for consideration.

'These are held in two very large rooms well adapted for the purpose. We found 400 boys in the Male and 297 girls in the Female School.

'Each child pays a penny per week for tuition. The system of instruction is an union of whatever has from time to time appeared to the Committee most deserving of adoption in the several systems of Bell, of Lancaster, and of Pestalozzi. The proficiency which is attained in the arithmetical system of the latter by many of the elder boys and by several of the candidate masters is very remarkable. The order, despatch, cleanliness, and accuracy so desirable in the conduct of a school have attained a high degree of perfection in these establishments.

'In the Girls' School the several descriptions of needlework appear to be objects of particular attention; and it is a circumstance much to the credit of all persons concerned that while so much difficulty is complained of by other institutions in finding masters or mistresses for the apprentices whom they are desirous of sending forth, even with the assistance of apprentice fees, there is an unsought and anxious resort to the Model Schools of Kildare Place by persons seeking as a favour to be put in communication with the parents of the children whom they find there.'

Even higher, because viewed from a wider standpoint, is the praise bestowed by the Count de

[1] Report, p. 41.

Lasteyrie in the letter already more than once alluded to :

'Le compte de Lasteyrie et son fils ont visité avec beaucoup de détail cet établissement. Ils n'ont été moins etonnés de l'ordre admirable qui régne dans toute ses parties que des excellents principes sur lesquels il est fondé. La ville de Dublin peut se flatter de posséder le plus bel établissement de ce genre qui existe dans le monde entier, et qui devoit être imité dans toutes les capitales de l'Europe si ses gouvernemens considéroient bien leur intérêts et s'ils savoient remplir leur devoirs envers le peuple.

'Le Compte de Lasteyrie,
'Vice-Président de la Société d'Enseignement Mutuel de Paris, 10th September.'

The Society had good cause to be proud of schools which were thus authoritatively pronounced the best in the whole world, and a model which ought to be imitated in every capital of Europe.

CHAPTER IV.

INSPECTION AND INSPECTORS.

It is characteristic of the thoroughness with which the founders of the Education Society went to work, that we find the necessity for inspection recognised from the first.

The Report presented, June 6th, 1812, by the Sub-Committee appointed for the purpose of framing a plan for the operations of the Society contains the following recommendation: 'We also are of opinion that it is advisable to have three or four qualified young men, to be paid by the Society, whose duties shall be to travel over Ireland and organize schools when required, and assist in their management from time to time.' Some years naturally elapsed before it became possible to carry this suggestion into action. It was not till 1820 that the first of the permanent inspectors, Lewis Mills, was appointed. Up to this date such inspection as the Society were able to accomplish had been carried out by Veevers in his vacation. It is certainly not the

least of the merits of this remarkable man that he was able, after his labour for the greater part of the year at Kildare Place, to devote apparently the whole of his spare time to visiting and reporting upon the schools in connexion with the Society.

The duty of inspection first became urgent when, in the year 1818, it was found possible to supplement the salaries of the teachers by grants, or 'gratuities,' as they were termed. From the first it was wisely determined that the gratuities should be paid only on the reception of favourable reports from the schools. In order to obtain these reports, inspection became a necessity. Accordingly, the whole subject was referred to the Correspondence Sub-Committee.

The document which gives the result of the deliberations of the Sub-Committee is of great interest, not merely because it became the foundation of the Kildare Place inspection system, but because it lays down educational principles as sound now as they were then, whose general observance however would still seem to be in many respects a matter for the future.

After recommending that the grants of the Society should be paid, not as fixed salaries, but in the form of gratuities for successful service—'merit grants,' as they would now be termed—the Committee proceed as follows:

'In order to ascertain the cases in which such

remuneration should be given, your Committee recommend a certain combination of resident superintendence and itinerant visitation—they apprehend that the former alone might degenerate into inactivity, and the latter, if unassisted by the former, might too often be decided by appearances which might be only temporary.'

Details follow as to the local superintendence, and the visits and reports of the Society's inspectors. The importance and influence of the inspector's office is fully recognised; indeed, so comprehensive is the view taken on this subject, that it reaches far beyond the routine of school inspection, and sees in the inspector an officer filled with zeal himself, and losing no opportunities of spreading among all classes, from the highest to the lowest, the educational enthusiasm which it was the aim of the Society to inspire. How far this ideal was realised it will be the business of the present chapter to show.

That no time might be lost in carrying these recommendations into practical operation, a tour of inspection was organised by Veevers for the autumn of the same year (1818). Travelling in those days was not the pleasant and expeditious process it has since become. To-day the inspector moves by rail, with the help of an occasional hired car. If he spends the night from home, a well-appointed hotel is generally his goal; but for the most part distance has been for him so completely

annihilated, that he reposes each evening in the comfort of his own family circle. Matters were different in 1818. There were, of course, no railways, and such public coaches as ran were of little or no assistance. Nothing remained but to establish the inspector in his own gig, and to send him from school to school, and inn to inn, on a tour which, as a rule, knew no break, and permitted of no return, until every school upon the list had been exhausted. Nine months, and even ten were the times allotted to these tours when the system was fully developed; and not infrequently the inspector, as he returned to town wearied with prolonged absence and hardships innumerable, had to start off again immediately to inspect extra schools, which it had not been found possible to include in the ordinary tours.

The schools to be inspected were, however, not so numerous, when for the first time in the autumn of 1818, J. Veevers, having closed the Model School, and dismissed the teachers in training, mounted his gig, with the object of spending his vacation on an inspection tour.

It is with no little interest that we scan the records of this, which would seem to have been the first approach, not only in Ireland, but in England and Scotland, to a government inspection of schools. Through Meath, Louth, Armagh, Down, Antrim, Derry, Donegal, Tyrone, Fermanagh, Cavan,

Westmeath, and Kildare, Veevers drove, seeing a few things that pleased him, and many that called aloud for reform. He visited in all 78 schools in correspondence with the Society, and nearly as many others with which they had no connexion. Of the first class, 33 had had masters trained at Kildare Place; and with reference to some of them it was evidently with a thrill of pleasure that Veevers wrote: 'I beg leave to express the satisfaction I experienced at the superior appearance of several of those schools conducted by masters assisted by the Society.' Of the same class of schools he was able to report that with reference to the three R's, the only subjects attempted, the 'improvement was satisfactory.' Here, however, his catalogue of praise became exhausted. Even the better class of schools, *i.e.* those supported by private patrons, or receiving aid from the Society, were for the most part clumsily built, and inadequately furnished. The patrons had zeal, but not knowledge; and the teachers—it must have been hard for the trainer of the teachers to acknowledge it—even when they had been at Kildare Place, were often as though they had never been trained at all. A variety of reasons is assigned, one of them being the hostility of the great mass of untrained teachers, who resisted improvement, lest it should destroy their personal means of livelihood. But whatever the causes were, the fact stood out that even trained teachers, like

their untrained brethren, were sometimes of the most inefficient type. There were those among them who were quite content to spend the whole day in attempts, which were often fruitless, to teach their pupils to read.

As for the other schools, those which were commonly started on what is now known as the private adventure system, the master's sole support being the fees, in them everything was wrong; they had no system, no accounts, no time-table, no requisites of any description, nothing but dirt and disorder. Quite typical appear to have been the academies whose doors, as Veevers put it, answered 'the treble purpose of entrance, window, and chimney.' Equally typical were the masters who, when expostulated with as to their defects, met all suggestions for improvement with 'What will it benefit me? If I attempt a change I encounter a certain risk, without an equal chance of gain.'

And yet in the face of all this squalor and ignorance, Veevers was able to conclude his report by alluding to a fact which after experience abundantly corroborated, namely, 'the general zeal which prevailed in all ranks for the instruction of the subordinate classes.'

In the following year, Veevers undertook his second inspection under similar circumstances. This time he drove south, going right through Leinster and Munster. Everywhere schools of a kind

abounded. He visited 122. In many respects his experiences were similar to those of the northern tour. The school-houses were often very wretched, many of them were not weatherproof; masters with but one subject were frequent. Sometimes the only work done seems to have been committing to memory portions of the Roman Catholic Catechism. Still, on the whole, the report is decidedly more hopeful in tone. The influence of the Kildare Place Society has been spreading. Their gratuities are having a stimulating effect. Their trained teachers are more numerous, and the influence of their numbers begins to tell. He sums up his results by saying, 'as to the general proficiency of the children attending the schools assisted by the Society, I feel satisfied in stating that it is satisfactory, particularly so in the knowledge of arithmetic. In few instances only I found them deficient in spelling and reading.'

The work thus energetically begun bore fruit immediately. Veevers was no mere critic; he was ready with practical suggestions for remedying the defects which he observed; and he possessed the skill necessary for putting them into proper shape. Many of the school books, and nearly all the devices for school organisation described in the last three chapters, were his work. The following passages from his reports show that he was largely responsible for the system of gratuities, based upon inspection, with which this chapter is chiefly concerned:

OF THE UNIVERSITY OF

'I would beg leave to call the particular attention of the Committee to this subject of gratuities, as I conceive it to be a most important means in their hands to promote the education of the lower orders, by inducing well-qualified and intelligent masters to undertake an employment, the emoluments of which are seldom adequate to a respectable maintenance.

'It is highly desirable that an extensive and permanent plan of inspection should be in efficient operation. Nothing short of it will be found to be a sufficient check on the carelessness and inattention of masters, whose exertions will be found to relax, when not upheld by a sense of duty, a dread of reprehension, or by a hope of reward.'

The recommendations thus clearly given were as willingly adopted by the Society. Gratuities to deserving masters became the regular method of payment, and steps were at once taken towards obtaining a permanent staff of inspectors. The first appointed was a former student. The name of Lewis Mills occurs in the Report for 1818 (Appendix) as that of one of the 'young men who have been trained as masters in the Seminary of the Society, in the year 1818. He entered May 15th, being 20 years of age. His training ended on June 19th, and he was at once placed in charge of Street School, County Westmeath. There he rapidly established a reputation, as is shown by the testi-

monials which he received from the parishioners of all ranks, Protestant and Roman Catholic, when making application to the Society. These recommendations he more than justified. During a long course of varied and difficult service, the Society had no more zealous or efficient officer. Moving among a body of men, all of whom came from other ranks in life, he became so identified with them that the secretary, Mr. J. D. Jackson, when asked by the Commissioners of Education if the inspectors were of the rank of gentlemen, replied, 'They are all entitled to be so considered, for although one (Mr. Mills) was in humble life, his conduct entitles him to that character.'

L. Mills was appointed inspector in January, 1820, and the inspectorate was gradually strengthened until in 1824 there were six inspectors, a number which was afterwards increased to eight.

It is no part of our object to supply exact details either as to the personal history of the inspectors or as to the state of the individual schools they visited, nor are the materials available of a kind to make such an undertaking possible. Enough however has been preserved to give the fullest general information. The plan upon which the inspection was conducted may be gathered from the Society's reports and minutes. In the diaries of the inspectors, some of which remain, the dry bones take shape. We can, as it were, climb up into the vacant place in their gigs,

mark the miles they travel, and revisit the strange hotels at which they had to sleep. Their letters, of which some hundreds remain, are full of fresh details as to the conditions under which they worked, their personal hardships, their satisfaction with the progress of education, their loyalty and devotion to the interests of the Society. Finally, in the evidence they gave before the Commissioners, we seem to have the men themselves before us, and to hear their voices speaking out of the past.

The irresistible conclusion, from all these varying sources, is that the inspectors of the old Kildare Place Society were an exceptionally fine body of men. Indeed the educational zeal of the time, and the influence of Kildare Place in directing it, is shown in few ways more clearly than by the class of men who came forward to bear their part in the work. On being informed by Mr. Jackson that of the two Roman Catholic inspectors one was a barrister, nephew of Lady Fingal, and of Sir Edward Bellew, and the other the nephew of Lord Wallscourt, the Commission expressed surprise at its being possible to induce such persons to seek the office. Mr. Jackson explained that though the emoluments were only sufficient for unmarried men, yet the work was not disagreeable, and he added: 'I can very well conceive gentlemen not influenced so much by the emoluments of the situation as by a desire to be useful.'

Proofs of the spirit to which the secretary referred

are abundantly present in the evidence and the letters of the different inspectors, from which it is plain that to a man they had caught the spirit of the Committee's recommendations, and that most of them were enthusiasts upon the subject of education generally, with a special devotion to the system of the Kildare Place Society. In his evidence Mr. Jackson says of M. Donelan: 'No man could discharge his duty more scrupulously, more faithfully, or more prudently than he has done.' In a private letter of Lewis Mills, he says of his brother inspector, 'Donelan showed great zeal on this (the western) tour, and was generally liked.' W. V. Griffith, an interesting personality in many ways, writes, 'In business I find my best enjoyment.' Better proof still, because more inclusive, is to be found in the eagerness with which they all added to their work. 'What number of schools had you to visit?' was a question asked of L. Mills, to which he answered, 'I should suppose at least 176; but I visited and reported upon at least 230.' In answer to a similar question, Malachy Daly, a Roman Catholic inspector, said, 'I visited, for my own amusement, some schools that came across me'; and similar testimony was borne by all the others. Even when circumstances compelled them to be off duty, their thoughts would seem to have been with their work. W. V. Griffith, writing from Newry, while explaining that he has been detained by illness, adds, 'You are not

to suppose however that I am idle—I feel the importance of this great work of education too strongly to neglect it.' Of their special devotion to their own Society there is evidence everywhere. Expressions of regard and respect abound in the letters, and in the answers to the enquiries of the Commission; but far stronger than any mere expression on the part of an officer are such acts as those for instance of W. V. Griffith, who, on resigning his office in 1831, volunteered a permanent subscription, and of L. Mills, who, when invited to inspect the Model Schools after his connexion with the Society had terminated, insisted on doing the work gratuitously, and sent back the £10 which the Committee had voted.

But though there existed this pronounced loyalty to the Society and its interests, it would be a mistake to imagine that it was coupled with any sacrifice of personal independence. The tone of the inspectors is that of men who were taking a willing part in a great work, and who expected to be treated, not as officials, but as co-workers. In writing to the office they apparently felt themselves under no obligation to suppress their feelings. In a few instances letters of this kind have been annotated when received, in a way which gives a curious insight into the feelings of both the parties concerned. 'Important' is the impress which appears in W. V. Griffith's writing outside one of his letters. Mr. Topham, the receiver,

has drawn his pencil through it, and written 'impertinent' instead. The letter itself is of no real *importance*, unless to illustrate the fact that W. V. Griffith, as he himself acknowledges, sometimes lost his temper; but it, and many others, sufficiently illustrate the independence of which we are speaking. Nor was this freedom of speech confined to letters; even in their public utterances, as is abundantly shown in the evidence given before the Commission, the inspectors did not hesitate to put forward their own opinions, both as to the working and the prospects of the Society.

This tone adopted by and permitted to the inspectors was only what we should expect from the special nature of their duties. The work of the modern inspector begins with the inspection of his schools, and ends with the presentation of his reports. Far wider was the scope of an inspector under the Kildare Place Society. 'We soon became aware,' says Mr. Jackson in his evidence, 'that there were other very important functions for the inspector to perform besides merely the examination of the conduct of the school; for example, the inspectors are in fact the representatives of the Society, they come in contact with the gentlemen of the country who are engaged in promoting education, and we found it was necessary to have persons intelligent and well informed, capable of holding communication with the resident gentry, and of explaining the

principles and objects of the Society, and of encouraging persons everywhere throughout the country to embark in the cause in which we are employed.'

The inspectors were in fact commissioned propagandists; and very great success seems to have attended their efforts in this direction. A great deal of the opposition which the Society had to face arose from mistakes as to its real motives and procedure. These mistakes the inspectors laboured most earnestly to correct. Their monthly diaries represent them as having interviews frequently with influential local magnates in order to promote the establishment of schools, and to remove the prejudices which clogged the wheels of the system. Here is the account which Malachy Daly gives in his evidence of his success in removing the hostility of a priest. 'The Priest of the parish told me the master of a school in connexion exclusively with the Kildare Place Society had been refused the rites of the church for the last two years in consequence of being master under the Society, and that this refusal was by the directions of the Bishop of the diocese. I endeavoured to explain the rules and the principles of the Society to the Priest, and he asked me afterwards to allow him to go to the school along with me. I took him there, and on his return he told me he would remonstrate with his Bishop, and almost in spite of his Bishop he would administer the rites of the church to him.' An instance of a larger kind may be quoted from

the letters of M. Donelan. In explaining why he has not been able to forward as many school reports as usual he says, 'On Sunday, 5th October, I received a most pressing request from Mr. Strickland that I would wait on him in order to have an interview with Dr. M'Nicholas, the Roman Catholic Bishop of Aconry (*sic*), on the subject of education. To comply with this request I had to travel upwards of 50 miles out of my way, but knowing the great extent of power which Mr. Strickland possessed as the representative of Lord Dillon's property, and satisfied that I had to deal with highly enlightened and liberal persons who from conscientious motives alone opposed the principles of the Society, I thought that no sacrifice of time or personal convenience would be too great if I succeeded in gaining over two such powerful assistants in the cause of education. I accordingly thought it prudent to comply with this request, and I am happy to say that the result of the explanation I made has been attended with complete success. After a very lengthened discussion, and a very minute examination of the printed regulations of the Society, both these gentlemen concurred in a determination to apply for assistance to erect eight new school-houses, to be conducted exclusively on the principles of the Society.'

The interviews, however, did not always terminate so pleasantly, and sometimes the inspectors, as a result of their zeal, found themselves in situations

of a peculiarly trying description. Before passing to consider the other phases of the inspectors' work, we quote as an illustration M. Donelan's graphic account of his experiences when denounced by a Bishop from the high altar. 'I am sorry to say,' he writes, 'that the result of this visit[1] has been most unfavourable, if not to the Society, at least to me personally. Yesterday after mass, before a most crowded audience, he not only condemned the principles of the Society, but attacked me personally as their officer in a manner so harsh, and so unprovoked upon my part, that I am at a loss to conjecture what could be the cause of it. He alluded to me from the altar in so strong and so unequivocal a manner that he drew upon me the eyes, and I fear the disapprobation, of the whole congregation.'

The character of the man, and his zeal for his work, come out in the remark about this treatment which follows.

'But let not the Committee conceive,' he adds, 'that this kind of unmerited disapprobation will ever deter me from a faithful and zealous duty. On the contrary, convinced that I am right, and satisfied that I am the officer of a Society whose intentions are perfectly pure and upright towards the Catholic population of this country, I will persevere with unabated zeal, nay, with increased ardour. Such

[1] To the Bishop, with a view to converting him to the principles of the Society.

public censure, however unmerited, may be galling to my feelings, and may perhaps injure me hereafter through life, but even this I disregard so long as I feel conscious that I have not done anything to incur the censure of the liberal and thinking part of the community.'

In order to fill in this general outline of the character of the inspectors, and of their success in their work, it will be necessary to give a somewhat more detailed description of the plan which the Society drew up for their guidance, and of the conditions under which this plan was carried into operation.

Everything in connexion with the inspection was in the hands of the Inspection Sub-Committee. They mapped out the tours, received the reports of the schools, and awarded the gratuities to the teachers in accordance with the opinions pronounced upon their merits. The largest number of inspectors employed at any time was eight. This was the staff in 1825, and it continued at the same figure till the withdrawal of the Parliamentary grant. Both the Committee and their officers recognised keenly the impossibility of any thorough accomplishment of the work with such limited machinery; but the precarious nature of their income, and its comparatively small amount, made it impossible to venture upon any further expansion.

The problem before the Committee, then, was how

to inspect some 1600 schools scattered all over Ireland by means of eight inspectors. For its solution eight separate tours were planned. For each a 'road book' was drawn up, containing lists of schools in the order in which they were to be visited, together with directions as to the roads best suited for the inspector's horses and gigs. No objection was raised to a departure from the prescribed route if sufficient cause could be shown, but severe censure descended upon any who were considered to take undue liberty in this respect. No interruption of a tour once begun was permitted without the express leave of the Committee. Unless in cases of illness—and these owing to the conditions and severity of the work were numerous enough—the interruptions seem to have been few and far between. A few days at Easter or Whitsuntide formed the only intervals which could be claimed for a return to home or the transaction of any private business. One of the special features of the Society was the arrangement that every year each inspector was allotted a new tour. The plan was well conceived for giving an accurate view of the state of education, together with an accurate insight into the progress of the Society. We reap this advantage still in having the opinions not of one, but of a number of competent men as to the condition of the different districts. But the very system which added to the value of the information

collected could not fail to detract from the educational value of the inspectors' work. An attempt at continuity was made by requiring each inspector to leave careful memoranda of all that he observed, and the partial success of the regulation is proved by the fact that the faults noted by one inspector were commonly corrected before his successor came. None the less, however, the inspectors were unanimous in regretting their inability to effect permanent reforms under a system which was fatal to any accurate personal knowledge, either of the districts through which they travelled, or of the schools entrusted to their charge.

For the work thus planned the inspectors were most carefully chosen and prepared. Though the salaries offered were on an extremely moderate scale, ranging only from £60 to £120 at the highest, applicants in abundance presented themselves for each vacancy. Definite educational qualifications were not so easily found. It followed that a most searching inquiry into the *personnel* of the candidates was necessary, if suitable appointments were to be made. After election, the inspectors were required to undergo a course of instruction at the Model Schools, where they mastered the 'new method,' and learned the intricacies of their work from Mr. Veevers. Their first inspections were, as far as possible, conducted under the eye of an experienced inspector. So soon as they were ready to under-

take a regular tour an outfit grant was voted, for the purchase of gig, horse, and harness, and they were allowed a fixed sum per diem for travelling expenses.

As they issued forth from Kildare Place in the early months of each year, bent upon the educational conquest of the whole of Ireland, three main objects were put before them :

The promotion of education generally.

The inspection of existing schools.

The promotion of the sale of the publications of the Society.

Of these the first and second concern us here.

Reference has already been made to the efforts of the inspectors in spreading the Kildare Place system of education. The instances given are not to be understood as either spasmodic or isolated. Not only was it the duty of the inspector to visit schools in operation ; but when schools had closed, he was bound to enquire into the causes upon the spot. When schools had not been established, he was expected to impress their need upon the influential members of the community. So far as it lay in his power, each inspector was required to call upon the patrons and managers of schools. He was to be ready to meet and enter into conference with inquirers as to educational work, and in general he was to lose no opportunities either of disseminating or collecting educational information. Suffering as

the Society did from perpetual opposition and unlimited misrepresentation, the Committee considered it of first importance to have as inspectors men whose bearing would conciliate opponents, and whose intelligence would fortify friends.

The work of inspection proper was laid down upon principles at once so minute and so comprehensive that they naturally became the model for many subsequent systems; and it may be said of them, as of the regulations for the work of the Society in general, that there are not a few particulars in which they are well ahead of the most approved modern developments.

In one respect the demands upon these pioneer inspectors were less exacting than those of later times. Reading, writing, and arithmetic were almost the only subjects for examination. Pestalozzi's system for teaching arithmetic had been early introduced at Kildare Place, and the inspectors did what they could to make its use general. In connexion with writing, the plan so general now of requiring the copies of the preceding year to be presented, along with those just completed, at the time of inspection, was introduced and probably devised by the Society. The classification for reading was extremely minute. The report forms for each school show the pupils who know the alphabet, those who can read monosyllables, and those who can read polysyllables, as well as the number of good

readers. From these details it will be evident that the examination of individual pupils was practised to the fullest extent; indeed, the merits of the individual appear to have received an amount of attention now almost unknown. Special instructions were given to the inspectors, requiring them to single out for notice the individual children who answered well at the examination. As an illustration of the devices which sprang from this instruction, in W. V. Griffith's general Report for 1828 there still remain two specimens of pupil's handwriting fastened together and sealed with his seal, to which the following note is fixed:

'One of the specimens attached hereto was presented to the inspector on the last and the other on the present occasion. They are now sent to the friends of the writer, in order that the improvement which has taken place in the interim may be seen by them.'

The plan, he says, acts as a premium to the good writer, assures the parents of his proficiency, and brings home to them a clear idea of one of the advantages of inspection.

But if the subjects for examination were light, the same cannot be said of the other duties at the time of inspection. The most exhaustive directions were given with regard to cleanliness, neatness, and order. One of the missions which the Society took upon themselves was the improvement of the general habits

of the people. They rightly believed that this could be accomplished by means of their schools. Accordingly, they required their inspectors to exact scrupulous cleanliness and neatness on the part of both teachers and pupils, and they expected all the movements in the school to be carried out with the precision of which Kildare Place furnished a model. Wherever proper attention was not paid to these matters the grants were withheld.

Great care in the examination of the roll and report books was strictly enjoined. Criticism was rife as to the returns made by the Society with reference to the attendance at their schools. The inspectors had to guard against such attacks by the most exact precautions.

Another department, in which an unusual degree of knowledge was necessary, embraced everything connected with the structure of the schools and school-houses. The inspectors were expected to report upon the materials of which schools were built, their dimensions, how they were lighted, how ventilated, for what number they were fitted, what apartments there were for the teachers; they were further directed to inspect schools for which building grants had been given, while the works were in progress, and to report fully as to their style and the rate at which they were being erected.

Finally, upon the inspector devolved the duty of enforcing the rules of the Society with reference to

religious instruction. The unpopularity of these rules, both with the Roman Catholics and with the members of the Church of Ireland, made their breach almost a merit in many eyes. Arrayed against the inspector were the forces both of customary carelessness and of deliberate design. However keenly he might report 'deviations,' however rigorously the Office might fine the guilty parties, however sedulously a pretence of reformation might be paraded, there was always the feeling that evasion was in the air, and that by no possibility could it be outmanœuvred. 'The masters have great power of deceiving us,' was M. Donelan's frank confession to the Commissioners of Educational Inquiry; and again, 'I was duped, as I frequently am.'

The force which gave point and reality to this full system of inspection was, of course, the power of the purse. Upon a careful summary of all that came under his notice, special attention being given to the observation of the rules for Religious Teaching, and to order, cleanliness, and neatness; the Inspector classed the school as I., II., III., or IV. The Committee, on receiving his report, put beside it any additional information which had come from Managers or Local Correspondents, and awarded the gratuity in accordance with the evidence.

Not less noteworthy than the system of inspection itself were the rules adopted for ensuring its persistent regularity. The Committee expected to

be kept constantly supplied with Inspectors' reports; no delay was allowed, and no accumulation permitted. The reports were required to be written up at once, and forwarded upon the first opportunity. The Committee desired to see, with their inspectors' eyes, the condition of the schools, and any delay in sending the required information met with expostulation, and, if continued, with reprimand.

From this account of the comprehensive duties imposed upon their inspectors by the Society, let us turn to glance at some of the special difficulties under which they were discharged. Ever present was the sense of a work too great for the number of officers it was possible to employ. This frequently necessitated the most severe labour. 'Having this moment returned from a walk of fourteen miles (the second horse being worn out) I have only time,' etc., writes W. V. Griffith. And again 'of late I have generally walked from fifteen to three-and-twenty miles.' The same inspector states at another time, 'without rising frequently two hours before day it would have been impossible to have succeeded in accomplishing the task I proposed to myself.' The difficulties inevitable owing to the circumscribed resources of the Society, were heightened by imperfect information as to localities of the schools. Sometimes the greatest inconvenience arose from want of accurate information in the 'road books.' 'With the utmost difficulty,' writes M. Donelan,

I have at length discovered the precise situation of Lemanaghan School. For this purpose I was obliged to send a special messenger to Mr. Holme's, and with difficulty even found out his residence. It is from interruptions of this kind I have been delayed so long, and on my arrival here met with another in finding no Inn in the town.'

What the inspectors accomplished in spite of difficulties may be gathered from a glance at their monthly diaries. Thus we find W. V. Griffith in Oct. and Nov., 1830 doing no less than 80 schools, and this at a time of which he writes, 'during a great part of these two months I was very unwell—the weather was exceedingly severe.' This was perhaps an unusually high record, but an average of 6 schools a week, for 9 or 10 months every year, appears to have been what was ordinarily accomplished. The work they exacted from their horses and gigs was wonderful. Day after day they drove, covering distances of 20, 25, 30, 35, and even 40 miles. No wonder their bills for repairs were oppressive, no wonder their horses sometimes died by the way. As can well be imagined, the personal inconveniences to which the inspectors were exposed were frequent and severe. It was customary to forward their travelling allowances in instalments to different places on their tours. Uncertain posts, and uncertain movements led to many disappointments. Often the inspector found himself in a

strange place without a penny in his pocket. Sometimes he had to travel in a similar condition. In one of his letters, R. Daly tells how he covered 30 miles on fivepence halfpenny, a feat which he justly claims as a triumph of economy. The actual conditions of the travel led necessarily to much hardship and privation—open vehicles, bad and dangerous roads, miserable inns, no inns at all—these were the everyday portion of the Kildare Place inspector, and they were varied only too often by dangers of a graver kind. Once W. V. Griffith was cut off from his Christmas quarters at Gracehill by the perilous condition of the mountainous roads he was attempting. On another occasion he found himself storm bound in Rathlin. Here is an account of his sufferings in other directions: 'I have suffered so severely from rheumatism' (damp beds made this complaint almost a necessary condition of the post) 'since I left Dublin, and more recently from an upset which nearly cost me my life, that I am induced to beg permission to finish my business on this coast before I go to Ballymoney. It cannot make a difference of one day in point of business, and it may be of some use to me to bathe.' In the same inspector's diary for April, 1830, the following notes occur, and they are worth quoting as giving an insight into the discomforts and dangers to health which the inspectors had to face. 'April

13th, returned from Dublin to the neighbourhood of Ballyjamesduff, meaning to proceed on my tour the ensuing day, when I was taken very ill—had myself bled and blistered, and was ordered to confine myself strictly to the house for some days. To this effect, I forwarded a certificate from an apothecary, whom I had sent for to Cavan (7 miles distant) to attend me. From the 13th to the 26th I was not more than three hours out of the house in which I was taken ill, and on the latter day (afraid of encountering damp beds on the road) I proceeded to Enniskillen (32 miles distant) was unable from fatigue to visit a school on the 27th—went to see one on the 28th—set out to another on the 29th—was misdirected, travelled 10 miles and found it too late on my return to go elsewhere; on the 30th I found myself too ill and weak to undergo the fatigue of inspecting a school.'

It is interesting to note, as evidence of the close attention paid by the Society to the movements of their inspectors, that W. V. Griffith was severely reprimanded for the absence from his tour which this illness caused. He had, in fact, been too ill to announce his illness. There was a tone of righteous indignation in his letter of explanation, which at once changed censure to pity. But the whole incident is especially instructive, as showing how the inspectors worked, and how the Committee watched.

Particulars of the hardships suffered by the inspectors might be indefinitely multiplied. Griffith's picturesque style lends itself naturally to quotation, and his correspondence is fairly complete: for this reason his experiences chiefly have been quoted. Enough has probably been said to bring before us a tolerably clear idea of what the work of inspection meant from 1820 to 1830, but the picture will certainly not lose in colour if it is completed by two extracts from L. Mills.

Having been chidden for sending the reports slowly in 1824, he writes from Ballina to the Secretary: 'Believe me you cannot be more anxious than I of avoiding every possible delay in sending my returns, but the numerous difficulties I have to contend with in getting through this desert, must be taken into calculation. I frequently breakfast at 7 and dine at 9, without taking any other refreshment than a draught of water affords during this time. Would you credit it that upon a late occasion, after visiting the schools and having 11 miles to drive, I was forced to ask refreshment, and was refused. When I mention this as one of the many trying circumstances that await me, I wish it may proceed no further. While I serve as I do, I shall not murmur, because there is no remedy, and I desire to avoid inflicting pain; but still these events often make me unable to attend to business.'

Here is his self-restrained account of what it meant to inspect schools in Clare Island, some twenty miles out from Westport:

'I left this on Thursday morning in an open boat, and slept at Clare Island that night after visiting the schools, then I proceeded to Erris, and did not land until three o'clock next morning. What I suffered during the voyage is more than I can ever tell, and the hardship I had to endure on my return here was even more than the first. In a word, I had more to contend with during the four days I was out, than I ever experienced before.'

If any further evidence is desired as to the results of the Committee's plans, and the inspectors' labours, it can best be given by pointing to the rapid progress made by the Society, and to the wholesale reformation in educational matters which they accomplished.[1] As special proof that the inspectors bore a large share in this advance, we may state, that in the evidence given before the Commission, the strongest testimony was borne by many witnesses to the direct effect for good of the visits of the inspectors, and that the gratuity system which they administered was quoted, in contrast with the fixed salaries given by other organisations, as a potent lever for improvement. Even had no such testimony existed, no one could mark the enthusiasm

[1] See Part I. throughout, and especially ch. iv.

pervading the Inspectors' utterances, sufficient proof of which has been afforded in the quotations given above, without feeling assured that the labours of a body of men so able, so earnest, and so devoted, could not fail to exercise far-reaching influences for good.

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Abbreviation, K.P.S. = The Education Society, commonly known as the Kildare Place Society.

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